Principal examiner reports for teachers

Principal examiner reports for teachers summarise what candidates did well and what candidates needed to improve for this examination series only.

This report is to be used in conjunction with the question paper and mark scheme.

For guidance on teaching and learning we provide resources for many of our syllabuses.

Resource	Where to find it
Grade descriptions – Grade descriptions describe the level of performance typically demonstrated by candidates achieving the different grades awarded for a qualification.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Syllabus and specimen materials
Schemes of work – Schemes of work are designed to support you in your teaching and lesson planning.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Lesson planning – Guidance on how to plan a lesson.	Lesson planning
Resource plus – There may be additional resources such as teaching packs containing lesson plans, resources and worksheets and videos for aspects of your syllabus.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Teaching tools	Teaching Tools
Exemplar candidate responses	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Learner guide – A guide for students to help them understand what the course involves.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Community forums – Do you have a question or something to share? Our online forums are great way to keep up to date with your subject and the global Cambridge community.	Community forum on the school support hub
Access to scripts for this series.	Access to scripts service
Results analysis is available for some syllabuses.	Results analysis
Test maker is available for some subjects.	Test maker

Other services from Cambridge International Education

- **Digital mocks service**
- **Insight assessments**
- **Professional development**
  - Focus on assessment
  - Online marking workshops

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Paper 9696/11
Core Physical Geography

Key messages

What candidates did well

- There was excellent use of case studies and exemplar material, especially when the area of reference was local to the candidate.
- The exemplar material used tended to be drawn from more recent time periods and therefore, more relevant events.
- Candidates showed good subject knowledge and understanding of the full range of the syllabus.

What candidates needed to improve

- Candidates should pay careful attention to the key command word in the question. There was a difference as to what the question required when it asked for 'describe' as opposed to 'explain'.
- For questions that ask candidates to describe a pattern, there needed to be some focus on what the pattern is, not just a description of the map/graph.
- Candidates needed to be more reflective in their evaluation in the essays. Descriptive accounts with a concluding paragraph rarely got out of Level 2 because they are only summed up what had been written in the preceding paragraphs.
- Some responses would have benefited from a clearer structure. Although **part b** questions in the option questions were not essays and did not require a conclusion or evaluation, responses would have benefited from clear paragraphs developing specific points.
- Precise geographic vocabulary of rock characteristics needed to improve. Words such as 'hard', 'soft', 'strong' or 'weak' were frequently used to describe rocks and are relatively meaningless.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates recognised that the general pattern of discharge was that it increased downstream.
- Some candidates added further detail like where the highest discharge and where the lowest discharge occurred.
- Focused well on the evidence that was presented on the map.

Limited responses

- Many candidates did not realise which way the river was flowing, thinking it flowed from the sea inland.
- Many candidates just wrote a place-by-place description of river discharge. This is not a pattern.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates supported their explanations with evidence from the map. For example, they referred to where two tributaries joined and quoted discharge figures to show how it had increased, and from this were able to link increased discharge to increased volume of water.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates confused discharge with velocity therefore explained changes in river speed rather than discharge.
- Because many candidates thought the river was flowing from the sea inland, they were less able to give any valid comments as to why discharge increased.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates supported their reasons with relevant exemplification, for example, a particular storm event was named to support a comment on weather conditions.

Limited responses

- Many overlooked the phrase 'with time' of the question or interpreted it to be as it flows downstream rather than considered an actual time scale.
- Many responses described the changes in discharge that happen downstream in every river.

Question 2

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Most correctly identified fog or mist.

Limited responses

- A few candidates described it as cloud.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates gave a clear step by step process of either advection fog or radiation fog.
- Use key terms and processes were present, meaning the response could be short, yet precise.

Limited responses

- Many candidates confused fog formation with more general cloud formation.
- Many candidates focused on adiabatic cooling, linked to relief/orographic rainfall.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates had a clear understanding of albedo and were able to give examples of surfaces that had varying albedo rates, such as snow or ice and tarmac roads.

Limited responses

- Many candidates did not address the 'diurnal' part of the question even by just talking about the difference between day and night figures.

Question 3

(a) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates correctly identified the mass movement as being some sort of slide or slip. Terms such as slump and landslide were commonly used.

Limited responses

- Many candidates incorrectly suggested soil creep, although the cross-section shown in the diagram indicated rotational slip/slumping.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates were able to quote two pieces of evidence from the diagram. The most popular ones were cracks in the road surface and trees/telegraph poles leaning over/bending.

Limited responses

- Candidates who incorrectly stated soil creep as being the mass movement often also incorrectly stated terracettes as a piece of evidence, although these were not clearly evident in the diagram.

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(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates were able to use the wide variety of information shown in the diagram to suggest some reasons for the mass movement. Popular reasons were the buildings on the slope increasing load on the ground, and the steepness of the slope increasing the effect of gravity.

Limited responses

- A few candidates referred to causes that were not shown in the diagram, such as deforestation. Where these suggestions were not supported by evidence from the diagram, responses were less well developed.
- A few candidates simply gave a list of bullet points without further development of their reasons.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Some candidates kept their response well focused on rock structure, referring to the presence of things like joints, cracks, and bedding planes within the rock and explaining how the presence of these features influenced mass movement.

Limited responses

- Many candidates talked about rock type rather than structure.
- Many candidates had a limited vocabulary when describing rocks, using fairly meaning less words like ‘hard/soft’ or ‘strong/weak’.
- Many candidates identified a correct rock structure and simply described it, without moving on to say how it influenced mass movement.

Question 4

(a) (i) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many responses showed a clear understanding of what transport was and were able to give examples of how a river transported its load.

Limited responses

- A few candidates interpreted the question as requiring a description of the different ways a river transports its load and provided detailed accounts of the four transport processes.

(ii) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates had a sound understanding of how meanders are formed and gave a clear step by step structure incorporating the key processes and terminology.

Limited responses

- A few responses named some key processes like helicoidal flow, or thalweg, without using them in context or showing full understanding.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates demonstrated a clear understanding on the concept of how a storm hydrograph is affected by drainage basin characteristics and were able to discuss a wide range of characteristics. Popular ones were changing land use (deforestation/urbanisation) and size and shape of the drainage basin.

Limited responses

- Some candidates understood and mentioned basin characteristics but did not explain how they influenced the shape of the hydrograph, including features key such as lag time, rising limb and peak discharge.
- A few candidates used generic words like ‘flashy’ or ‘measured’ to describe the changes in the storm hydrograph. Responses would have benefited from more detailed explanation, including reference to changes in lag time and peak discharge.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates showed a clear understanding of the requirements of the question.
- Many candidates incorporated relevant case studies effectively to support their points.

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- Candidates demonstrated evaluation by referring back to the focus of the question throughout their responses when drawing together their arguments.

Limited responses
- Some candidates wrote descriptive accounts of a flooding event with little reference to physical or human factors apart from a cursory conclusion at the end.
- A few candidates described causes of flooding without considering the relative importance of physical and human factors.
- Some case studies were not clearly located or dated therefore remained relatively generic, for example 'the River Ganges floods a lot'.

Question 5

(a) (i) Comprehensive responses
- Most responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the definitions and included many relevant points.

Limited responses
- A few candidates showed some confusion about the processes involved in convection.

(ii) Comprehensive responses
- Some responses accurately described latent heat.

Limited responses
- Many of the candidates could not explain the transfer element of the question.

(b) Comprehensive responses
- Most of the candidates provided a basic description, referring to it being hotter at the equator compared to the poles.
- Some of the candidates showed clear understanding that several factors contribute to variations in temperature, such as angle of incidence of the sun's rays affected both the surface area and the amount of atmosphere the radiation passed through.

Limited responses
- A few candidates included explanations that were not relevant to variations in temperature and latitude. The usual misconception was saying that the equator is hotter because it is closer to the sun than the poles are.

(c) Comprehensive responses
- A few responses focused on the demands of the question, referring to atmospheric impacts as a result of climate change. There was a discussion on the impact of increased temperatures, linking this to melting ice and changing sea levels.
- A very few responses were able to discuss other atmospheric impacts of global warming, by broadening their response to discuss increased cloud cover linking it to increased precipitation and changes in pressure systems linking it to trade winds and ocean currents.

Limited responses
- Most of the responses wrote about climate change impacts generally rather than focusing on how they impacted the atmosphere – which is what the question is asking for. So, melting of the glaciers, rising sea levels and loss of habitats were not relevant though were often described in detail.
- Many responses inaccurately stated that the hole in the ozone layer is a result of climate change.
- Most responses were unable to write clearly about any other atmospheric impacts of climate change beyond 'it gets hotter'.

Question 6

(a) (i) Comprehensive responses
- Most candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the two processes.

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Limited responses

- A few candidates described weathering processes rather than erosion processes.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Most responses showed excellent understanding of what grading was and how it reduces mass movement.

Limited responses

- A few candidates confused grading with terracing.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates understood both the processes and landforms that occur at both types of convergent (destructive) plate boundaries. That is, oceanic-oceanic plate boundaries and oceanic-continental plate boundaries and were able to give examples of them.
- Many candidates gave clear and comprehensive explanations of the process of subduction, including reference to slab pull and convection currents as well.
- Many candidates were able to link the process to the specific landform it created.
- Some candidates provided clear, well-labelled diagrams to illustrate the point being made.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not take note of the word ‘destructive’ that followed convergent plate boundaries in the question so wrote about collision boundaries as well.
- Some responses discussed processes first then landforms in a second paragraph separately, which limited opportunities to demonstrate the links between them.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates had good knowledge of different types of weathering and explain how temperature and precipitation affected not only the type but also the rate of weathering as well.
- Some candidates considered other factors like amount of vegetation cover and rock structure as additional features that can affect weathering types and rates.
- Many responses referred to Peltier’s diagram to support their comments on the relationship between temperature and precipitation.

Limited responses

- Some responses focused on the type of weathering with limited consideration of the rate.
- Some responses were mainly descriptive accounts of types of weathering. Whilst comment was made about temperature and precipitation in doing this, there was little evaluation of the differing significances between them.

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Paper 9696/12
Core Physical Geography

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Most candidates demonstrated secure knowledge of key hydrological processes and were able to identify flows correctly from drainage basin diagrams (**Question 1(a)**).
- Most candidates were able to describe and explain physical processes such as throughflow, groundwater flow, infiltration and the role of water in mass movement (**Questions 1(b)** and **3(c)**).
- Many candidates demonstrated a good understanding of how changes in climate, vegetation and land use influence drainage basin processes over time (**Question 1(c)**).
- Most candidates were able to interpret resource material accurately including maps, diagrams and graphs and extract data effectively to support their answers (**Questions 2(a)**, **3(a)(ii)** and **3(b))**.
- Many candidates demonstrated sound understanding of river management strategies, particularly hard engineering approaches, and were able to explain how these reduce flood risk (**Question 4(b)**). There were some effective diagrams produced by candidates which helped answer the question.
- Extended responses that were well structured and applied detailed case study knowledge, while maintaining a clear focus on the requirements of the question throughout, fully addressed the command words used in the longer response questions (**Questions 4(c)**, **5(c)** and **6(c)**).

What candidates needed to improve

- Some candidates need to develop a more precise understanding of geographical terminology and key term definitions (**Questions 4(a)(i)** and **5(a)(i)**).
- Some candidates need to read questions more carefully to ensure that answers address the specific focus of the question. (**Questions 1(c**) and **2(b)**).
- Some candidates need to distinguish more clearly between describing a process and explaining the reasons for it occurring, particularly in shorter response questions (**Questions 5(a)(ii)** and **3(c)**).
- Candidates should ensure that they identify and use evidence from resources accurately, including units and scales taken from graphs and diagrams (**Questions 3(a)(ii)** and **3(b)**).
- Many candidates would benefit from using of cardinal directions more consistently when interpreting resource material that involves locating features which included a compass (**Question 2(a)**).
- Candidates should ensure that examples and case studies are accurate and specific, and that they are directly relevant to the question. Generic material and factual inaccuracies limited the quality of some extended responses (**Questions 4(c)**, **5(c)** and **6(c)**).
- Some candidates need to improve the structure and organisation of longer answers so that arguments are balanced and remain focused on the question (**Question 6(c)**).

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates correctly identified flow A as infiltration in Figure 1.1.

Limited responses

- Some candidates confused flow A with one already labelled in Figure 1.1, such as throughflow.

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(ii) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates correctly identified a drainage basin output shown in Figure 1.1.

Limited responses

- Some candidates confused the term *output*.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most responses focused on throughflow and groundwater, with a basic description of the process.

Limited responses

- Few candidates gave reasons for the movement of water, such as gravity.
- Some candidates did not correctly identify types of water flow below ground.
- Some candidates included more than the two types of water flow below the ground.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- More successful responses included changes in precipitation, soil water storage, vegetation and land use. Explanations of how two of these factors altered the passage of water through the basin were done well. Seasonality and changes in land use were more frequent than other possible explanations.

Limited responses

- Some candidates focused on differences between drainage basins rather than changes within a drainage basin over time.
- Explained how vegetation alters overland flow, rather than develop on how the change in vegetation impacts the overland flow over time. A similar approach was seen with urbanisation, which meant that the temporal focus of the question was not fully addressed.

Question 2

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- There were some effective responses on drought.
- Effective responses focused on the overall pattern of the impacts of global warming and looked at a range of impacts.

Limited responses

- Some candidates used descriptors such as ‘above’ or ‘below’ were used instead of cardinal points when locating the impacts of global warming shown in Figure 2.1.
- Several candidates went for a region by region approach rather than a description of the pattern of impacts.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Some candidates gave good comments on changes to evaporation linked to drought and precipitation.
- Human/anthropogenic causes were commonly highlighted.

Limited responses

- Reasons were not related to specific impacts and drifted into reasons for location within Africa rather than links to climate change.
- Limited responses explained general reasons for the formation of some of the identified impacts (for example how floods or droughts were formed) instead of placing the focus on the fact that they are presented as impacts of global warming.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Some candidates made links to glaciers or sea-ice melting with development associated with sea level rise.
- Candidates focused on increase in world temperature over time and analysis of past climatic records from the start of the industrial era.
- Some candidates identified changes in season patterns and impacts on animal behaviour.

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Limited responses

- Many responses included vague statements about increased temperature or extreme weather. Many candidates did not understand that evidence was required rather than simple description such as 'it has got hotter'.
- These responses tended to rely on generalised statements with limited supporting evidence.

Question 3

(a) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates correctly identified solifluction.

Limited responses

- Some candidates identified creep.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates correctly identified the maximum velocity as 1 km/hr and had included units.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not correctly identify the maximum velocity of mud and debris flows.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates identified speed and range of creep and solifluction.
- Most successful responses used correct data from the source with accurate readings.

Limited responses

- Use of the resource was inconsistent, and some candidates had difficulty with the arrows at the end of the lines.
- Most candidates did not understand the data in the resource and did not identify correctly the numbers.
- Some candidates tried to divide the graph and approximate and did not realise the units were different and ended up with incorrect data.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates saw the role of water in the impacts on stress and cohesion. Some good material on pore water pressure.
- Most responses linked one aspect of the presence of water with others that were resulting from it and ended up with developed arguments and examples.

Limited responses

- Some responses were lengthy answers on freeze-thaw not linked to weakening rocks or falls.
- Only a few approached the question by taking different types of mass movement and mentioning the role of water. These responses inevitably ended up explaining the process of mass movement, rather than the role of water.

Section B

Question 4

(a) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates were able to fully explain hydraulic action and helicoidai flow in

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided basic explanations but

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates were able to explain that a higher drainage density leads to a flashier response.

Limited responses

- Some candidates demonstrated a limited understanding of drainage density and made little reference to its impact on a storm hydrograph.

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- Many candidates did not know what drainage density meant and confused it with surface or shape of the drainage basin, leading to inaccurate responses.
- Many candidates were able to give a correct definition of drainage basin and link this to its impact on the hydrograph.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of the types of hard engineering and explained how they worked. Dams were explained very well, often with supporting examples.
- More responses were able to name and explain how each method worked in preventing river flooding and offer examples.

Limited responses

- Some responses identified a management strategy but provided limited explanation of how it reduces flood risk. Others focused on soft engineering approaches rather than the hard engineering methods required.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- Most successful responses were clear and well-structured with development of impacts specific to selected flood event and the final conclusion was signposted throughout.

Limited responses

- Generic impacts of flooding put into the context of a vague example such as Bangladesh.
- The choice of flood limited some answers, especially Boscastle, where ‘many people died’ in some answers, which was not the case.
- Exaggerated numbers, factually inaccurate and generic impacts of floods regardless of whether the floods were named or not.

Question 5

(a) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Albedo was defined more consistently than sensible heat transfer.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not understand sensible heat and lacked reference to ‘amount’ in albedo.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Temperature and humidity were the atmospheric characteristics most frequently described.

Limited responses

- Some responses focused too much on explanation.
- Candidates explained why the urban heat island effect happens rather than describe the effect.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates explained rain, dew and fog well.

Limited responses

- Candidates described the three different types of rainfall: convectional, orographic/relief and frontal.
- Some candidates could not explain the formation of snow and hail.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates understood the contrasting thermal capacities of land/water and able to link them to seasonal variation. Some good examples focusing on the UK and locations within China (coast/inland).
- Candidates explained the impact of axial tilt and there were some good comments on ocean currents and the impact on the UK.

Limited responses

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- Candidates did not link to seasonal variation in temperature.
- Candidates explained other reasons and therefore could not offer a balanced counterargument.

Question 6

(a) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates answered this question well and mentioned the impact of roots, interception and evapotranspiration.

Limited responses

- Some responses did not cover enough sufficiently different ideas.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Soil creep and rainsplash were the most small-scale mass movements and were largely done well.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not demonstrate a secure understanding of small scale.
- Some responses identified mudflows and landslides not paying attention to the question asked.
- Some candidates mentioned more than two small-scale movements.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- More successful responses linked processes to the landforms they produce.
- More successful responses were able to explain not only the processes, but the types of landforms and to offer examples of where these are.

Limited responses

- Some responses talked about island arcs, fold mountains or ocean trenches and explained divergence and the formation of ridges very simply.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- More successful responses referred to specific rock types and weathering processes, such as carbonation in limestone and hydrolysis of feldspar-rich granite. These responses also considered the climatic conditions required for processes such as freeze-thaw weathering and exfoliation.

Limited responses

- Some responses had evidence of a lack of a planning and resulting in disconnected points that were difficult to follow.
- Some responses lacked a clear structure and moved repeatedly between rock type and climate, resulting in repetition and reduced clarity
- Some candidates provided unbalanced and explained climate's impact on weathering almost exclusively, losing focus on rock type.

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Paper 9696/13
Core Physical Geography

Key messages

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Limited responses

- Some candidates did not demonstrate a secure understanding of small scale.
- Some responses identified mudflows and landslides not paying attention to the question asked.
- Some candidates mentioned more than two small-scale movements.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- More successful responses linked processes to the landforms they produce.
- More successful responses were able to explain not only the processes, but the types of landforms and to offer examples of where these are.

Limited responses

- Some responses talked about island arcs, fold mountains or ocean trenches and explained divergence and the formation of ridges very simply.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- More successful responses referred to specific rock types and weathering processes, such as carbonation in limestone and hydrolysis of feldspar-rich granite. These responses also considered the climatic conditions required for processes such as freeze-thaw weathering and exfoliation.

Limited responses

- Some responses had evidence of a lack of a planning and resulting in disconnected points that were difficult to follow.
- Some responses lacked a clear structure and moved repeatedly between rock type and climate, resulting in repetition and reduced clarity
- Some candidates provided unbalanced and explained climate's impact on weathering almost exclusively, losing focus on rock type.

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Paper 9696/21
Core Human Geography

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Candidates showed good knowledge of the underlying ideas studied in the course. Their case study knowledge was often good, including detailed place-specific evidence backed up with statistical data.
- Most candidates were able to answer data-related questions, completing simple calculations and identifying anomalies.
- Many candidates showed a good understanding of the command words used in the examination. This enabled them to focus their answers on the requirements of the questions. Those who did so wrote concise, relevant answers that addressed the questions effectively.
- Most candidates managed their time effectively and were able to complete all the questions within the time available.
- Many candidates wrote well-structured, evaluative essays which presented detailed evidence, analysed its importance and reached well-reasoned conclusions.

What candidates needed to improve

- Candidates should be aware that the number of marks available is a guide to the amount they are expected to write. For example, a 4-mark question typically requires either four simple points or two developed points that include additional detail or explanation.
- ***Section B***, part **(c)**, requires an evaluative response that includes a reasoned judgement supported by evidence and a justified conclusion. Candidates should allocate sufficient time to this question. Some candidates left their responses to ***Section B*** unfinished.
- Candidates should note that where a question asks for two aspects (for example, **Questions 4(a)(i) and 6(a)(ii)**), they should provide only the number requested. Providing additional responses may reduce the time available for extended answers elsewhere in the examination.
- Candidates should familiarise themselves with the meanings of commonly used command words such as ‘describe’, ‘compare’ and ‘explain’.
- Where a question refers to a particular group of countries, such as LICs, MICs or HICs (**Questions 4(a)(ii), 5(a) and 6(b)**), candidates should ensure that their responses are relevant to that group rather than giving generic answers or using examples from a different type of place.
- Candidates should avoid inaccurate data and unsupported generalisations. For example, ‘Mumbai is 95% Muslim and the government doesn’t allow contraception’ and ‘Climate change will lead to some areas being warmer because they will experience longer sunlight hours’.
- Where questions require responses to be supported by examples, candidates should provide recognisable and specific examples. Some candidates referred to examples in name only, for instance ‘India’ or ‘Lagos’, before giving a generic response that was not specific to the place. Responses would benefit from detail that provides a clear sense of place, such as specific place names, locations, descriptions or relevant statistics. Candidates should also use recent examples where possible.
- Good case study knowledge is needed, especially in ***Section B***, but it must be applied appropriately to the question. Some candidates included extensive case study detail that was not directly relevant to the question, which reduced the focus of their responses. For example, in ***Question 4(c)***, many candidates cited China’s One Child Policy as a cause of falling birth rates but went on to describe the history, social impacts and shortcomings of the policy in detail, much of which was not relevant to the question. Candidates would benefit from selecting the aspects of a case study that directly support the points they are making.

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Question 1

(a) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Answered correctly and showed working.

Limited responses

- Gave the correct answer but did not show working.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Correctly identified Japan's comparatively low-calorie consumption relative to other (HICs). Higher-level responses further developed this by noting the similarity between Japan's calorie intake and that of (LICs), quoting figures and demonstrating a more analytical interpretation of the dataset.

Limited responses

- Made a simple statement about Japan's relatively low calorie intake but did not refer to the data or compare it with named countries.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Recognised that higher levels of disposable income enable individuals to afford a greater quantity and variety of food, while national wealth facilitates the large-scale importation of food products. Comprehensive responses also considered the consumption of high-calorie processed foods and the prevalence of junk food and fast-food outlets.

Limited responses

- Made a simple statement about wealth and affordability.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- Demonstrated a good understanding of the multidimensional nature of food security, recognising that different aspects of food security can influence whether average daily calorie requirements are met at a national scale. Many responses recognised that food availability alone does not ensure food security and that food may be available in sufficient quantities but lack the nutritional quality required for a balanced and healthy diet.
- A number of responses also showed good conceptual understanding of the limitations of the term 'average.' Candidates recognised that national-level data can obscure significant regional, socio-economic, and demographic inequalities, and may not accurately reflect variations in food security within a country.

Limited responses

- Did not show an understanding of the term 'food security' and instead framed their responses in terms of food safety, food that is safe to eat, or keeping food safe from theft.

Question 2

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Showed a good understanding of the term 'pattern' and described groups of countries in geographical areas, linking the number of migrants to distance and identifying countries that did not fit the pattern described.
- Made use of the scale to support observations about migration trends and the relationship between migration and distance.

Limited responses

- Did not show an understanding of the term 'pattern' and instead listed countries in the different categories shown in the key.

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(b) Comprehensive responses

- Identified distance (quoting distance measured using the scale of the map) and cost as the primary factors limiting migration flows from Argentina to the USA and developed this further by recognising Argentina's relative economic stability, level of development, and opportunities for growth as factors that reduce the need for outward migration.
- Demonstrated geographical understanding by recognising that Argentina has fewer push factors than Mexico.

Limited responses

- Identified distance as a factor but provided limited development and did not provide a second valid reason.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- Demonstrated a good understanding of the impacts of climate change, including crop failure, food insecurity, loss of agricultural employment, the increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, temperature extremes affecting habitability, and the effects of rising sea levels on coastal and island communities. These responses also explained how such impacts could lead to international migration rather than internal displacement.

Limited responses

- Offered generalised responses with limited linkage to both climate change processes and international migration. Statements such as 'it is hot near the equator' reflected an understanding of existing climatic conditions rather than demonstrating knowledge of *climate change* as a dynamic process.
- Showed a tendency to make broad assertions about migration for employment without explaining how climate change drives these economic shifts or necessitates *international* rather than internal migration. The term 'increase in natural hazards' was often used inaccurately, with some citing geological hazards such as earthquakes, volcanoes which are not associated with climate change.
- Misinterpreted the focus of the question by discussing voluntary migration motivated by a desire to experience a different climate, rather than migration in response to the impacts of climate change.

Question 3

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Demonstrated a clear understanding of the fundamental requirements of manufacturing industry, including the need for large areas of land to accommodate production facilities and allow for future expansion and access to good transport links. Additionally, many candidates demonstrated a sound understanding of urban economic theory and recognised that land towards the urban periphery is typically less expensive, making it more attractive for manufacturing activities that require extensive space and seek to minimise costs. Higher-level responses effectively integrated these economic principles with the characteristics of High-Income Countries, demonstrating a more applied and contextualised understanding.

Limited responses

- Overlooked the specific command wording, particularly the requirement to focus on 'a manufacturing area in a city in a HIC,' and answered in terms of a shopping centre and access to a retail customer base.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Made good use of the photograph, for instance suggesting that surface run-off could enable pollutants to enter the neighbouring fields and water courses or identifying that the site was adjacent to a motorway/highway intersection.
- Referred to specific sources and types of air pollution from both industrial units and commercial vehicles.

Limited responses

- Simply listed different types of pollution without any detail or reference to the photograph, for example 'Air pollution, water pollution and noise pollution'.

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(c) Comprehensive responses

- Identified relevant reasons for changes in the location of manufacturing within urban areas, particularly the need for site expansion and proximity to transport networks. Some responses developed these points linking them to cost reduction, accessibility, and logistical efficiency within the urban environment.
- Some responses explored the role of government policies in driving intra-urban relocation. These included references to gentrification, urban regeneration, and large-scale redevelopment projects (for example, Olympic infrastructure or major investment schemes), which displace traditional industrial activities and encourage movement to alternative locations within the city. Such responses demonstrated a more sophisticated understanding of the dynamic nature of urban land use.

Limited responses

- Did not focus on the key requirement of *changes within an urban area*. This was particularly evident where responses discussed national-scale deindustrialisation, including the decline of manufacturing in regions of a country. These responses did not address the intra-urban scale required by the question.
- Some responses assumed regarding the original location of manufacturing, with the incorrect assumption that factories were primarily situated in central business districts. This led to less accurate geographical reasoning.
- Related explanations to economic activities other than manufacturing, such as mining and retailing.

Question 4

(a) (i) Comprehensive answers

- Gave a full definition, including the three key components: under the age of one, per 1000 live births and per year.

Limited responses

- Omitted one or more of the key components. Some candidates either referred to deaths of young children more broadly or failed to include the correct time frame. Others referred to ‘per 1000’ but did not specify births.

(ii) Comprehensive answers

- Gave clear explanations supported by detail or exemplification, such as improved healthcare services that provide treatment for common childhood illnesses, including pneumonia, diarrhoea and malaria; vaccination programmes that provide immunisation against diseases such as measles, polio and diphtheria; and access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation, which reduce the incidence of water-borne diseases such as diarrhoea and cholera.

Limited responses

- Gave a simple reason with no additional explanation or exemplification.
- Confused IMR and births, citing contraception and family planning rather than factors affecting infant survival after birth.
- Did not demonstrate an understanding of the term ‘rate’, suggesting that a lower number of births would automatically result in a lower death rate.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Identified a range of factors that could lead to increased death rates and supported these with relevant detail and exemplification. Responses drew on examples from cities at different levels of economic development.
- Referred to cities in MICs/LICs and included references to high population density contributing to the spread of disease, particularly where access to clean water and sanitation is limited in informal settlements.
- Pollution was also frequently cited, often linked to industrial activity and high volumes of traffic. Responses referred to respiratory illnesses caused by air pollution, including examples of smog in some Asian cities, water contamination leading to disease, and long-term health conditions associated with environmental degradation.

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Limited responses

- Confused *total deaths* and *death rates*. Some candidates incorrectly suggested that a larger population automatically results in a higher death rate, rather than recognising that death rate is a proportional measure (for example, per 1000 people).
- Over-emphasised deaths from crime - whilst violent crime could be a valid point, this is much less significant in terms of overall death rates than other factors, and many candidates spent too long giving descriptions of types of crime with spurious statistics such as 'many thousands of murders in London due to knife crime and gangs'.
- Demonstrated misconceptions about healthcare such as 'people in rural areas get to hospital quicker and have better treatments'.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- Generally supported the view that economic factors are the primary influence on birth rates but also acknowledged that additional factors can contribute to declining fertility in different contexts. Many responses recognised the role of development, linking higher birth rates in primary-based economies to the need for larger workforces, compared with more developed economies dominated by tertiary and quaternary sectors, where smaller family sizes are more typical.
- Most answers were effectively structured around economic, social, and political influences. Economic factors were often well explained, particularly in relation to the costs of raising children and the reduced economic necessity for large families in more developed contexts. Social factors, such as changes in attitudes towards family size and women's roles, were also referenced, although these were sometimes less well developed.
- Political factors were frequently illustrated through government policies aimed at influencing birth rates, including examples such as China's One-Child Policy and pro-natalist policies in other countries.

Limited responses

- Gave generalised accounts with limited detail or exemplification. While reference to government policies such as China's One Child was relevant, a common limitation was that candidates often gave lengthy descriptions of the policies themselves – including their successes and limitations – rather than directly addressing how they function to reduce birth rates.

Question 5

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Demonstrated clear comparative skills by directly linking characteristics (such as age, employment status, and skills level) across different migration flows. These answers maintained a consistent focus on the concept of *characteristics* and used comparative language throughout. Candidates referred to factors such as age (for example, younger versus older migrants), stage in the life cycle, and motivation for migration, although these were not always developed fully.

Limited responses

- Gave general descriptive accounts of each migration flow, often focusing on push and pull factors rather than the characteristics of migrants.
- The structure of some responses limited the effectiveness of the comparison. Many candidates presented ideas in separate paragraphs without making direct, explicit comparisons between different types of migrants (such as, rural–urban versus urban–rural). As a result, the comparative element of the question was often implied rather than explicitly stated.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Demonstrated an understanding of the role of modern technology in facilitating migration, with a wide range of relevant examples used. A significant proportion of responses focused on the role of smartphones, highlighting their importance in accessing employment opportunities, identifying appropriate transport routes, and managing logistical arrangements and initial settlement costs. These points were often supported by references to specific websites and applications, reflecting a contemporary understanding of migration processes.
- Many candidates also recognised that advances in transport technology have increased connectivity, making migration more accessible and, importantly, enabling return migration.

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The ability to travel more easily and affordably was often linked to maintaining connections with home countries, including visiting family. Similarly, some candidates noted the increase in flight availability and capacity as a factor contributing to greater volumes of international migration.

- There was also discussion of financial technologies, particularly the role of digital platforms in facilitating remittances, allowing migrants to support family members more efficiently. In addition, candidates frequently referred to the reduced emotional burden of migration due to communication technologies such as video calls, which enable sustained contact with family and friends. This was often linked to the idea that technology supports voluntary migration by reducing social and psychological barriers.

Limited responses

- Gave simple accounts in a very generalised way, without specifying any type of technology at all. For instance, these responses gave 'improvements in transport', without any time frame or detail about increased connectivity, cheaper flights, long haul flights becoming more accessible etc., or did not give any detail or exemplification about the role of specific technologies such as GPS, online banking, digital payments and personal communication apps.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- Considered the characteristics of cities and internal migration in countries at different levels of economic development. Where MIC/LIC countries were considered, rural-urban migration was discussed with answers covering characteristics that attracted migrants such as employment opportunities, housing, education and health care. Responses that considered internal migration in HICs discussed urban-rural migration and the negative characteristics of urban areas as a push factor.
- Good use of case studies from both HIC and MIC/LIC countries supported these responses.

Limited responses

- Described push-pull factors in general terms rather than focusing on the specific *characteristics* of urban environments that affect internal migration. These responses often included broad case study descriptions of rural-urban migration rather than selecting evidence that was directly relevant to the question.

Question 6

(a) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Showed that candidates understood the term 'world city' and picked out characteristics such as international finance, global decision-making, and, more specifically, the presence of headquarters (HQs) of Transnational Corporations (TNCs). Some responses clearly articulated how world cities function as key nodes within international systems, influencing flows of capital, information, and people across borders. These responses moved beyond describing large cities and instead emphasised their strategic role in shaping global economic and political processes.

Limited responses

- Focused on general characteristics of cities rather than addressing the specific concept of a *world city*. While many responses demonstrated sound knowledge of urban features, there was often insufficient emphasis on the defining element of global or international significance, instead these responses referred to large populations or centres of industry without being framed at a global scale or recognising the importance of influence and connectivity.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Recognised that the growth of world cities is closely tied to their role as command and control centres within the global system, driven by flows of capital, information, and people at an international scale. These answers moved beyond generic urban growth factors and demonstrated a clear understanding of the specific processes underpinning the expansion and increasing influence of world cities.

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Limited responses

- Discussed 'big' cities and gave explanations for urban growth in general, rather than focusing specifically on the processes driving the expansion of *world cities*. Responses frequently referred to factors such as rural-urban migration, natural increase and economic opportunities, which are relevant to urbanisation more generally but did not fully address the distinctive growth processes of world cities.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Provided a good range of relevant factors, particularly through the use of push and pull dynamics, in the context of well-learned case studies. Candidates commonly identified rural push factors such as lack of employment, poor access to services, and agricultural challenges, alongside urban pull factors including job opportunities, improved infrastructure, and better access to healthcare and education. This demonstrated a sound understanding of the drivers of rural–urban migration.
- Comprehensive answers also recognised that rapid growth is often amplified by natural increase within urban areas, particularly due to youthful population structures in LICs and MICs. These responses recognised how multiple factors can combine to produce rapid urban expansion.

Limited responses

- Did not focus on the command word *rapid*. While candidates understood why urbanisation occurs, fewer explicitly addressed why this growth is happening at speed.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Demonstrated a good understanding of the reasons why some urban areas have grown too large to be managed effectively. A wide range of relevant examples was used, including both developed and developing cities, which added depth and application to responses. Common themes included pressures on transport systems, inadequate sanitation and housing shortages, all of which were clearly linked to challenges in managing large urban populations.
- These responses considered the concept of 'large' within the question in two main ways focusing on population size, highlighting the strain caused by rapid increases in urban populations and the *physical expansion* of urban areas, noting that as cities sprawl, it becomes more difficult to provide infrastructure and services efficiently across an extended area. Such responses were able to integrate both aspects, recognising that it is not just the size of the population or the spatial extent alone, but the interaction of these factors that creates significant management challenges.
- Considered the context of cities in countries with different levels of economic development and discussed the view that with the right circumstances, big cities can be managed effectively, often citing Singapore or Tokyo as examples.

Limited responses

- Tended to be descriptive accounts of the problems of cities in MICs/LICs, frequently being an account of a case study of a squatter settlement/shanty town. While these responses included some valid points, they missed the context of the city as a whole and simply described the problems of the chosen case study.

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Paper 9696/22
Core Human Geography

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Candidates showed good knowledge of the underlying ideas studied in the course. Their case study knowledge was often secure, including detailed place evidence backed up with statistical data.
- Many candidates showed a good understanding of the command words used in this exam. This enabled them to focus their answers on the question set. Those who did so wrote concise, relevant answers which highly effective.
- Most candidates planned their time effectively and were able to complete all the questions in the time provided.
- Many candidates wrote well-structured, evaluative essays which presented detailed evidence, analysed its significance and reached rational conclusions.

What candidates needed to improve

- Candidates should be aware that the number of marks available is a guide to how much to write, for example, a 4-mark question would require 4 simple points or 2 developed points which add detail or explanation to their ideas. Long paragraphs are not required for these answers, such as was seen in **Questions 1(b)** and **3(a)**.
- ***Section B***, part **(c)**, is an evaluative question requiring a reasoned judgement and a supported conclusion. Candidates should allocate sufficient time to this question. Some candidates left their responses in ***Section B*** unfinished.
- Candidates should appreciate that where a question asks for two or three aspects (for example, **Questions 1(b)** and **4(b)**) and they provide more than the required number, only the required number of responses will be considered. Providing more than the number requested is not good practice and may take time away from extended-response questions.
- Candidates should familiarise themselves with the meanings of commonly used command words such as ‘describe’, ‘compare’ and ‘explain’.
- Where a question refers to a particular group of countries such as LICs/MICs in **Question 4(b)**, or specific area such as in **Question 5(b)**, candidates should tailor their answers accordingly rather than give generic responses or examples from a different type of place.
- Candidates should avoid using vague terms without saying what they include, such as ‘quality of life’, ‘standard of living’ or ‘strain on resources’. A typical example from **Question 2(c)** was: ‘*Migrants move to improve their lives*’ which requires further explanation.
- Candidates must appreciate that where questions ask for an answer ‘with the aid of examples’, relevant examples are an important part of an effective response. Examples should be recognisable and specific. Many candidates gave an example in name only, for instance ‘Brazil’, followed by a generic answer that was not specific to the place. Candidates should be encouraged to include detail that provides a clear ‘sense of place’, such as specific place names, locations, descriptions or statistics. Examples should also be recent and relevant.
- Good case study knowledge is needed, especially in ***Section B***, but it must be applied appropriately to the question. Some candidates repeated material they had learned about a case study without relating it sufficiently to the question, which reduced the focus of their responses. Candidates should be encouraged to select the aspects of the case study that best support the points they are making.

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Question 1

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates compared the changes effectively, and included data taken from the graph.

Limited responses

- Some candidates listed the data for each continent for a series of dates without referring to how figures had changed, and a few simply described each line on the graph without comparing them.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates were able to suggest two problems, typically health issues linked to obesity and pressure on healthcare services.

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided detailed explanations when simple reasons would have been sufficient.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates showed understanding of a range of climate change issues such as sea level rise, drought and flooding together with the ways in which they influence food security. Some candidates also showed understanding that climate change could make agriculture possible in new areas.

Limited responses

- Some responses showed a limited understanding of the impacts of climate change on both food production and distribution, relying on generic points about crop failure resulting from flooding and drought.

Question 2

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates calculated the percentages for all countries and drawn sensible conclusions, demonstrating an understanding that the proportion of migrants differs from the total number of migrants.

Limited responses

- Some candidates identified the country with the greatest number of migrants (Mexico) rather than relating the number of migrants to the total population.
- Some did not explain their reasoning and simply stated the percentage of migrants.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates answered this well and referred to distance and its impact on cost, as well as the role of chain migration in creating established communities, making migration less challenging for Mexicans.
- Many candidates demonstrated good geographical general knowledge through comments about Argentina having fewer push factors than Mexico.

Limited responses

- Some candidates chose Mexico which is the country with the largest number of migrants**.**

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates were able to give a range of reasons why young adult males migrate, usually including economic factors such as employment, social factors such as education, or the traditional social norms of some societies.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave very general reasons which would apply to any migrant rather than especially young males.

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Question 3

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates gave two relevant pieces of evidence, usually mentioning the roofless buildings or the lack of paved roads.

Limited responses

- Some candidates wrote generally about declining rural settlements rather than identifying specific features visible in the resource. Some also wrote at length when only identification was required, reducing the time available for later questions.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many responses mentioned that the isolated site, lack of roads, poor-quality farmland and hilly terrain could discourage people from living in the area shown.

Limited responses

- Some candidates made assumptions that were not supported by evidence in the photograph, such as ‘there will be a low birth rate’ or ‘there is no source of water’.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates suggested several appropriate improvements such as improving roads, increasing tourism or improving services such as healthcare or shops.

Limited responses

- Some wrote about improvements that were not appropriate for an isolated rural area, such as railway stations or shopping malls.
- Candidates should be aware that suggested improvements should be realistic and appropriate for the location. For example, shopping malls are unlikely to be suitable for an isolated rural area.

Question 4

(a) **Comprehensive answers**

- A minority of candidates answered this question well by making direct comparisons between the population characteristic of youthful and ageing populations, for example ‘*In a youthful population, birth rate is likely to be high, but in an ageing population it will be lower*’.

Limited responses

- Many candidates described the impacts of youthful and ageing populations rather than their population characteristics.
- Most candidates did not explicitly compare the two, instead presenting separate descriptive paragraphs.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates used examples which included detailed place-specific knowledge.
- Many explicitly linked improvements in health care, education to reductions in death rate, saying how an improvement in one resulted in a reduction in the other.

Limited responses

- Many responses would have benefited from clearer exemplification. Including only the name of a country or major city does not provide sufficient detail to support an effective response.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many responses showed good understanding of the strengths and limitation of the DTM, evaluating it throughout the response rather than solely in the conclusion.
- Many showed an understanding that the DTM is a simplified graphical representation of population change which does not include external factors such as migration, war, or government intervention.
- These responses allocated sufficient time to this question and were therefore able to develop their evaluation appropriately.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates continue to think of the DTM as a plan for governments to follow rather than as a simplified model used to explain population change.
- A significant number of candidates wrote lengthy descriptions of each stage of the model without evaluating it. As a result, their responses did not fully address the question.
- Some candidates did not include place-specific detail to exemplify the points they made.

Question 5

(a) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates understood that chain migration occurs when an initial migrant provides family members or friends with information that encourages them to migrate.
- Some candidates explained how the passing on of information made migration easier for those who followed.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not understand the difference between chain migration and step migration.
- Some candidates did not explain that a pioneer migrant secured information and resources which were passed on to later migrants.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates gave clear answers containing simple points which showed good understanding of the concept.

Limited responses

- Some candidates wrote about the benefits of chain migration to the country rather than the migrants themselves.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Many responses identified impacts on both the rural-urban fringe and the inner city, including CBD.
- Many candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of intra-urban migration and explained the issues and opportunities arising in both the source and destination areas of the city.

Limited responses

- Many candidates did not understand the term ‘intra-urban’ despite it being explained in the question. This resulted in many writing about urban-to-urban migration, or in some cases rural to urban migration.
- Some candidates did not include evidence from examples they had studied, instead giving only the names of cities such as Rio de Janeiro or London without further place-specific detail.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- Many responses showed an understanding that climate change is likely to affect small island nations and semi-arid zones initially, and the resulting migration is likely to be forced.
- Many candidates showed good understanding of a range of impacts of climate change, including sea-level rise, desertification, and reduced access to food and water.
- Many candidates recognised that migration is influenced by a wide range of factors such as war, social factors and economic need.

Limited responses

- Some candidates wrote little about climate change, instead listing other causes of migration without evaluating their relative importance.
- Some candidates relied on generic points, such as, loss of farmland or famine, rather than including detailed place-specific evidence.

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Question 6

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates wrote effectively about the move to the suburbs or rural-urban fringe to new retail parks or malls because of the need for parking, cheaper space and transport links.
- Many responses also described the impact of increased online commerce and 'click and collect' services on the location of retail activities, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Some candidates used detailed place-specific examples to illustrate their points.

Limited responses

- A few candidates did not understand that retailing did not include other land uses such as manufacturing.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates explained the role of economic factors in influencing the demand for and cost of housing, as well as the impact of social and cultural factors, particularly within immigrant communities.
- Many candidates showed a good understanding of the causes of residential segregation, illustrating their answers with relevant and detailed place-specific evidence.

Limited responses

- Some candidates wrote about the impacts of residential segregation rather than its causes.
- Some responses did not include specific examples of places. For example, referring simply to 'London' does not provide sufficiently detailed place-specific evidence.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates discussed relevant issues such as poor planning, inadequate funding, limited government control and insufficient service provision.
- Some responses considered if the inhabitants of the shanty town wanted to be managed/redeveloped, perhaps preferring to keep their communities intact.
- Many responses used detailed knowledge of shanty towns such as Dharavi to support their evaluation.

Limited responses

- Some responses focused on describing the conditions in shanty towns instead of evaluating how effectively they have been managed.
- Some candidates showed uncertainty about the meaning of management in this context and the groups responsible for it.

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Key messages

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- Many candidates wrote well-structured, evaluative essays which presented detailed evidence, analysed its significance and reached rational conclusions.

What candidates needed to improve

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- Where a question refers to a particular group of countries such as LICs/MICs in **Question 4(b)**, or specific area such as in **Question 5(b)**, candidates should tailor their answers accordingly rather than give generic responses or examples from a different type of place.
- Candidates should avoid using vague terms without saying what they include, such as ‘quality of life’, ‘standard of living’ or ‘strain on resources’. A typical example from **Question 2(c)** was: ‘*Migrants move to improve their lives*’ which requires further explanation.
- Candidates must appreciate that where questions ask for an answer ‘with the aid of examples’, relevant examples are an important part of an effective response. Examples should be recognisable and specific. Many candidates gave an example in name only, for instance ‘Brazil’, followed by a generic answer that was not specific to the place. Candidates should be encouraged to include detail that provides a clear ‘sense of place’, such as specific place names, locations, descriptions or statistics. Examples should also be recent and relevant.
- Good case study knowledge is needed, especially in ***Section B***, but it must be applied appropriately to the question. Some candidates repeated material they had learned about a case study without relating it sufficiently to the question, which reduced the focus of their responses. Candidates should be encouraged to select the aspects of the case study that best support the points they are making.

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Question 1

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates compared the changes effectively, and included data taken from the graph.

Limited responses

- Some candidates listed the data for each continent for a series of dates without referring to how figures had changed, and a few simply described each line on the graph without comparing them.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates were able to suggest two problems, typically health issues linked to obesity and pressure on healthcare services.

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided detailed explanations when simple reasons would have been sufficient.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates showed understanding of a range of climate change issues such as sea level rise, drought and flooding together with the ways in which they influence food security. Some candidates also showed understanding that climate change could make agriculture possible in new areas.

Limited responses

- Some responses showed a limited understanding of the impacts of climate change on both food production and distribution, relying on generic points about crop failure resulting from flooding and drought.

Question 2

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates calculated the percentages for all countries and drawn sensible conclusions, demonstrating an understanding that the proportion of migrants differs from the total number of migrants.

Limited responses

- Some candidates identified the country with the greatest number of migrants (Mexico) rather than relating the number of migrants to the total population.
- Some did not explain their reasoning and simply stated the percentage of migrants.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates answered this well and referred to distance and its impact on cost, as well as the role of chain migration in creating established communities, making migration less challenging for Mexicans.
- Many candidates demonstrated good geographical general knowledge through comments about Argentina having fewer push factors than Mexico.

Limited responses

- Some candidates chose Mexico which is the country with the largest number of migrants**.**

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates were able to give a range of reasons why young adult males migrate, usually including economic factors such as employment, social factors such as education, or the traditional social norms of some societies.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave very general reasons which would apply to any migrant rather than especially young males.

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Question 3

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates gave two relevant pieces of evidence, usually mentioning the roofless buildings or the lack of paved roads.

Limited responses

- Some candidates wrote generally about declining rural settlements rather than identifying specific features visible in the resource. Some also wrote at length when only identification was required, reducing the time available for later questions.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many responses mentioned that the isolated site, lack of roads, poor-quality farmland and hilly terrain could discourage people from living in the area shown.

Limited responses

- Some candidates made assumptions that were not supported by evidence in the photograph, such as ‘there will be a low birth rate’ or ‘there is no source of water’.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates suggested several appropriate improvements such as improving roads, increasing tourism or improving services such as healthcare or shops.

Limited responses

- Some wrote about improvements that were not appropriate for an isolated rural area, such as railway stations or shopping malls.
- Candidates should be aware that suggested improvements should be realistic and appropriate for the location. For example, shopping malls are unlikely to be suitable for an isolated rural area.

Question 4

(a) **Comprehensive answers**

- A minority of candidates answered this question well by making direct comparisons between the population characteristic of youthful and ageing populations, for example ‘*In a youthful population, birth rate is likely to be high, but in an ageing population it will be lower*’.

Limited responses

- Many candidates described the impacts of youthful and ageing populations rather than their population characteristics.
- Most candidates did not explicitly compare the two, instead presenting separate descriptive paragraphs.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates used examples which included detailed place-specific knowledge.
- Many explicitly linked improvements in health care, education to reductions in death rate, saying how an improvement in one resulted in a reduction in the other.

Limited responses

- Many responses would have benefited from clearer exemplification. Including only the name of a country or major city does not provide sufficient detail to support an effective response.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many responses showed good understanding of the strengths and limitation of the DTM, evaluating it throughout the response rather than solely in the conclusion.
- Many showed an understanding that the DTM is a simplified graphical representation of population change which does not include external factors such as migration, war, or government intervention.
- These responses allocated sufficient time to this question and were therefore able to develop their evaluation appropriately.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates continue to think of the DTM as a plan for governments to follow rather than as a simplified model used to explain population change.
- A significant number of candidates wrote lengthy descriptions of each stage of the model without evaluating it. As a result, their responses did not fully address the question.
- Some candidates did not include place-specific detail to exemplify the points they made.

Question 5

(a) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates understood that chain migration occurs when an initial migrant provides family members or friends with information that encourages them to migrate.
- Some candidates explained how the passing on of information made migration easier for those who followed.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not understand the difference between chain migration and step migration.
- Some candidates did not explain that a pioneer migrant secured information and resources which were passed on to later migrants.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates gave clear answers containing simple points which showed good understanding of the concept.

Limited responses

- Some candidates wrote about the benefits of chain migration to the country rather than the migrants themselves.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Many responses identified impacts on both the rural-urban fringe and the inner city, including CBD.
- Many candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of intra-urban migration and explained the issues and opportunities arising in both the source and destination areas of the city.

Limited responses

- Many candidates did not understand the term ‘intra-urban’ despite it being explained in the question. This resulted in many writing about urban-to-urban migration, or in some cases rural to urban migration.
- Some candidates did not include evidence from examples they had studied, instead giving only the names of cities such as Rio de Janeiro or London without further place-specific detail.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- Many responses showed an understanding that climate change is likely to affect small island nations and semi-arid zones initially, and the resulting migration is likely to be forced.
- Many candidates showed good understanding of a range of impacts of climate change, including sea-level rise, desertification, and reduced access to food and water.
- Many candidates recognised that migration is influenced by a wide range of factors such as war, social factors and economic need.

Limited responses

- Some candidates wrote little about climate change, instead listing other causes of migration without evaluating their relative importance.
- Some candidates relied on generic points, such as, loss of farmland or famine, rather than including detailed place-specific evidence.

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Question 6

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates wrote effectively about the move to the suburbs or rural-urban fringe to new retail parks or malls because of the need for parking, cheaper space and transport links.
- Many responses also described the impact of increased online commerce and 'click and collect' services on the location of retail activities, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Some candidates used detailed place-specific examples to illustrate their points.

Limited responses

- A few candidates did not understand that retailing did not include other land uses such as manufacturing.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates explained the role of economic factors in influencing the demand for and cost of housing, as well as the impact of social and cultural factors, particularly within immigrant communities.
- Many candidates showed a good understanding of the causes of residential segregation, illustrating their answers with relevant and detailed place-specific evidence.

Limited responses

- Some candidates wrote about the impacts of residential segregation rather than its causes.
- Some responses did not include specific examples of places. For example, referring simply to 'London' does not provide sufficiently detailed place-specific evidence.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates discussed relevant issues such as poor planning, inadequate funding, limited government control and insufficient service provision.
- Some responses considered if the inhabitants of the shanty town wanted to be managed/redeveloped, perhaps preferring to keep their communities intact.
- Many responses used detailed knowledge of shanty towns such as Dharavi to support their evaluation.

Limited responses

- Some responses focused on describing the conditions in shanty towns instead of evaluating how effectively they have been managed.
- Some candidates showed uncertainty about the meaning of management in this context and the groups responsible for it.

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GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/31
Advanced Physical Geography Options

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Many candidates provided responses that were relevant to the focus of the question, accurate in terms of the knowledge/understanding provided, and that included concise and compelling arguments to support the evaluation.
- Effective time management ensured that the correct number of questions were answered, with a clear understanding of the link between the marks available for the question and the time to be used for writing the response.
- Responses to resource-based, **part (a)** questions were well focused and concise, often emphasising the overall nature of the resource, rather than minor details.
- Responses to **part (b)** questions showed a clear understanding of the topic and (where relevant) a link to the resource on which the question was based.
- Essays were well planned, with a logical structure, covering a range of factors.
- Breadth of knowledge was combined with sufficient depth of understanding.
- Evaluation was made at the end of each paragraph and was linked to the factor under discussion.
- A final conclusion reviewed the factors discussed and came to an overall judgement as to the importance of each factor.
- These judgements arose from the arguments/information used throughout the essay.
- Locational examples and case-studies contained much place-specific detail, including numerical/statistical information, relevant to the question asked.

What candidates needed to improve

- Some candidates included material that was not focused on the demand of the question. For example, in a question about the impacts of a hazard, a whole page might be spent on the reasons for the hazard occurring.
- There was evidence that some candidates had spent too long on an initial question, leaving themselves short of time for subsequent questions. A few candidates ran out of time.
- Responses to resource-based **part (a)** questions were sometimes focused on the minor details rather than the 'big picture'. For example, day-to-day changes were listed, rather than giving the overall trend, with maximum and minimum values.
- Responses to **part (b)** questions tended to be descriptive rather than explanatory, ignoring the command 'suggest reasons for' or 'explain'. Future candidates should focus more clearly on the command words in the question rather than writing 'all they know'.
- Essays sometimes had a structure with various relevant factors described and evaluated in an illogical and jumbled way. Future candidates should deal with each relevant factor in turn, pulling the arguments together in an overall conclusion.
- Sometimes the essay covered a wide range of factors in a superficial way. Future candidates should focus on a more limited range of important factors and show good depth of understanding of their nature and importance.
- A simple comment in an introductory paragraph, such as 'I agree with the statement in the question' is not really an evaluation. It needs to be augmented by a detailed evaluation of the relevant factors and a conclusion based on the evidence presented in the body of the essay.
- Evaluation by assertion does not enhance a response. Future candidates should give evidence for their evaluative comments, by referring to the information they have included in their essay.
- Examples were sometimes vague and generalised. For example, 'The large Tohoku earthquake killed a lot of people' is limited. A statement such as 'The 9.1 magnitude Tohoku earthquake that happened in the sea off the east coast of Japan in 2011, killed about 20,000 people' is much more comprehensive.

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Some general points

- Overall, responses to **part (a)** questions were often more successful than responses to **part (b)** questions. Responses to **part (a)** questions generally identified and described features of the resource effectively. Candidates should continue to focus on making clear, relevant descriptive points when responding to these questions.
- **Part (b)** questions involve an understanding of process. Future candidates should note this and ensure that their responses are focused on the relevant processes required by the demand of the question.
- Two questions contained the phrase 'Using a case study…'. Case studies are more detailed than examples. Examples can be a place, an event, a specific hazard, or even a named plant species. Case studies need to be related to a real-world place that is relevant to the question. This allows candidates to include place-specific information in their response. For example, for a humid tropical environment a case study of the 'Central Amazon Conservation Complex' is more focused than a case study of the 'Amazon rainforest'. 'The tropical rainforest' is not an appropriate case study and leads to consideration of a range of places, which is not what the command 'using a case study…' requires.
- Responses to some essay questions demonstrated a broader range of relevant knowledge and understanding than responses to others. This may reflect differences in candidates' familiarity with particular topics.

Comments on specific questions

Option one – Tropical environments

Question 1

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates gave clear descriptions of the features and/or their location, linked to the photographic evidence available. For example, 'The tops of the hills in the foreground of the photograph consist of jagged areas of rock' or 'There are large areas of flat land between the hills, covered in grass or short vegetation.'

Limited responses

- Some candidates mentioned relevant features, such as 'hills' and included no descriptive adjective. Future candidates should use phrases such as 'isolated hills' or 'steep sided hills'.
- Vegetation was mentioned and it was not located using photographic evidence, for example 'there are many trees'. Future candidates should use phrases such as 'the tops and sides of the hills are covered in trees and bushes'.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates showed some knowledge of karst landforms and a sound understanding of the processes that lead to their formation. The importance of carbonation weathering of limestone bedrock with variations in joint spacing was recognised, as was the need for tectonic uplift and the changing position of the water table.
- There was an understanding of the cockpit karst, cone karst, tower karst sequence and the possible influence of cavern collapse.

Limited responses

- Some candidates confused the development of karst landforms with the development of granite landforms. Although the broad outline of the formation is similar (weathering followed by uplift), future candidates should focus on the specific processes related to the weathering of limestone bedrock and the development of karst features.

Question 2

Comprehensive responses

- Although very few candidates chose this essay, a few were able to focus on the nature of the plant communities, relating them and their adaptations to the relevant climatic features.
- Climatic climax plant communities were compared to plagioclimax and sub-climax plant communities, both within and between the two ecosystems, with reference to human activities and influences.
- The fact that rainforests are similar everywhere was sometimes compared to the fact that the savanna is an ecocline, with many variations between the forest edge and the semi desert.

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Limited responses

- Many candidates produced responses that were overly descriptive, focusing on individual plant adaptations, with a heavy focus on rainforests. Future candidates should focus on the structure of the plant communities and make a greater effort to compare the plant communities in the two ecosystems.
- Some candidates focused on climate alone, with limited reference to the influence of fire, soil and people. Future candidates should try to include a wider range of factors that have influenced the current plant communities.

Question 3

Comprehensive responses

- Option one was the least popular option. This essay was chosen more frequently than **Question 2**. Some candidates chose a well-focused case study and provided place-specific detail of the threats and the attempted solutions.
- There was a clear link to sustainability, evaluating the economic, social and environmental aspects of the attempted solutions related to the chosen case-study.

Limited responses

- Some candidates chose a very large area for their case-study, such as the 'Amazon rainforest' and then provided some very generic threats and/or solutions. Future candidates should choose a smaller, more focused area where more detailed information can be applied to evaluate the solutions to the threats specific to that area.
- Some candidates focused on threats with little reference to solutions. Others focused on solutions without explaining the threats. Sometimes a threat was named and then a solution proposed that was not linked to the threat. Future candidates should make it clear what the threat is and then evaluate the possible solutions to that threat, using information specific to their chosen case-study.

Option two – Coastal environments

Question 4

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates were able to describe the main variations in wave height clearly, using a few simple points, such as the maximum and minimum, the fluctuating nature of the wave heights, and the different pattern in the first few days, compared to the large and steadily decreasing fluctuations in the later part of the graph.
- Candidates made their points precisely and concisely, focusing on the key dates and the corresponding wave heights.

Limited responses

- Some candidates tried to give a day-by-day account of the changes. Future candidates should focus on the clear patterns in the variation, such as the difference between the first 7 days and the following 19 days.
- Some candidates gave incorrect height and date figures for the maximum and minimum points. Future candidates need to read the graph more carefully, providing accurate paired height and date information.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates recognised that wind was the key factor in determining wave height and explained how energy transfer from the wind to the sea surface generates waves. The greater the energy transferred the higher the waves.
- In developing this basic point, candidates referred to the importance of wind speed, wind direction and the length of the fetch, explaining how each of these could enhance the height of the waves.
- Place-specific detail was sometimes used to enhance the response. For example, the importance of the Atlantic Ocean in terms of the fetch of waves in SW France.
- The time scale was also used well, relating the peaks to possible Spring depressions/storms approaching the coastline every 3 or 4 days.

Limited responses

- Some candidates had no clear idea of the process of wave formation and its importance. For example, heavy rain was quoted as a reason for a higher sea-level and therefore higher

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waves. Warm temperatures were said to cause the same effect. Future candidates need to ensure that the processes they are quoting are valid explanations of wave formation.
- Changes to the nature of the offshore zone were sometimes quoted as reasons, together with the building of hard engineering strategies. Future candidates need to look closely at the timescale of the graph and consider the limited feasibility of these factors in the 26-day period covered by the graph.

Question 5

Comprehensive responses
- Very few candidates chose this essay. Some candidates considered both the plan and the profile of beaches with a clear evaluation of the factors involved.
- The impact of the nature of sediment size on the profile of beaches was linked to the effectiveness of the processes of swash and backwash and the varying nature of the waves.
- When considering beach plan, it was realised that sediment was a minor factor and wave direction/longshore drift was a much more dominant reason for beach variation.

Limited responses
- Several candidates only considered beach profile without addressing beach plan. Future candidates need to read the question more carefully and ensure that their response covers all aspects of the question.
- Some candidates interpreted ‘beach’ as ‘coastline’ and included much information that was not relevant, such as cliff erosion/retreat and the formation of sand dunes. Future candidates need to ensure that they have a precise understanding of the words used in the question.
- Responses sometimes referred to discordant coastlines without fully explaining beach formation within bays or the influence of bay shape on beach plan. Future candidates could try to explain how wave refraction leads to the deposition of sediment in the bays, and how the shape of the bays influence the plan of the beach.

Question 6

Comprehensive responses
- Option two was a popular option and many candidates chose to answer this essay, with many achieving a high standard.
- Many candidates were able to relate the threats to the specific conditions required for the growth of coral reefs. They then evaluated the specific solutions related to each threat, often using relevant and detailed exemplar knowledge.
- The seriousness of the various threats was related to the spatial and temporal scale over which they operate. Evaluation of the relevant solutions was then linked to the scale of the threat.
- The global scale threat of climate change was often broken down into threats linked to rising sea temperatures, increasing ocean acidification, and possible sea level rise. Each of these was then evaluated according to the temporal scale on which they operated, with an understanding that the first two were urgent threats, while sea level rise was a very slow-working threat. Evaluation of possible solutions was then based on this knowledge.
- Some responses recognised that local-scale management strategies may have limited long-term effectiveness if wider global threats are not addressed. This informed balanced conclusions regarding the effectiveness of different management approaches.

Limited responses
- Several candidates spent time outlining and explaining the formation of the different types of coral reef. Future candidates need to focus on the specific demand of the question.
- Some candidates discussed threats rather than solution strategies, while others discussed solutions unrelated to threats. Future candidates need to outline the threat, give an example of where it occurs and then evaluate the success of the strategy used to manage the threat.
- Some candidates did not link the threat to the needs of coral reefs, therefore not really explaining why it was a threat. Future candidates need to link the threats to the absence of the ideal conditions for coral growth, why these ideal conditions have changed and how effective the proposed solution is.
- The global threat of climate change was often mentioned and the possible solutions included vague statements such as ‘use less fossil fuels’. Future candidates need to be aware of the specific policies that individual countries are implementing to reduce the impact of climate change and the ways that the global community are trying to do the same. These national and international strategies should then be evaluated.

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- Sea level rise due to climate change was often listed as the most important threat. Future candidates need to realise that climate change is, indeed, a major threat to coral reefs, and that sea-level rise will occur so slowly that the other climate change threats (sea temperature rise and ocean acidification) will have destroyed the world's coral reefs long before sea level rise has any significant impact. In other words, the temporal scale at which the various threats operate is just as important as the spatial scale when evaluating the threats.

Option three – Hazardous environments

Question 7

(a) Comprehensive responses

- There were several valid comparisons that could be made, and many candidates identified these clearly, concisely, and accurately.
- The fact that the two profiles started and finished at the same elevation was frequently identified, together with the overall reduction in elevation along the slope.
- The change from a straight to a more irregular profile was a valid comparison, as was the fact that the elevation had dropped more in the first 150m from the top than in the second 150m.

Limited responses

- Some candidates confused gradient with elevation and made several incorrect statements as a result. Future candidates must ensure that they are using subject-specific language correctly.
- Although the overall gradient of the slope remained the same, several candidates insisted that the gradient had increased. Future candidates need to be specific in their responses, for example by using the statement 'although the overall gradient of the slope has stayed the same, the gradient has increased in the first 50m from the top of the slope'.
- Changes in elevation were sometimes given incorrectly, either in terms of the change in height or of the distance from the top where the change occurred. Future candidates should ensure the data given are correct, for example 'the greatest drop in elevation was of 30m at 75m from the top of the slope'.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Despite the popularity of this question, only a few candidates were able to suggest a relevant mass movement and link it to the changes that can be observed in the slope profile.
- Some candidates noticed the possible scarp at 45/50m from the top of the slope and the curved nature of the slope below this scarp. They then were able to suggest a rotational slump and provide reasons for why and how it occurred.
- The Asian location was sometimes used to justify a range of mass movement, often linked to heavy monsoon rainfall or the impact of typhoons, sometimes with relevant examples quoted.
- The movement of material 30m deep over a 100m stretch of the slope was also used to justify a major mass movement such as a slide, slump or flow.

Limited responses

- Some candidates resorted to the generic term 'landslide' and were unable to link it to the evidence presented by the resource. This led to a very vague and generic response. Future candidates need to think carefully about a possible mass movement process that could have caused such a large amount of material to be removed.
- Some candidates invoked soil creep as the possible process, despite the absence of related terracettes and even though such a large amount of material had been removed. Future candidates need to use the evidence of the resource, together with their own knowledge to come up with more likely processes.
- Very few candidates noticed that the original slope was resting at an angle of about 35°. Future candidates could use this information about the steepness of the slope to help them decide on the nature of the mass movement processes that had occurred.

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Question 8

Comprehensive responses

- Almost all the candidates chose this essay. Many candidates answered it well, considering and evaluating factors such as magnitude, economic development, preparedness, population density, proximity of the focus/epicentre, perception of risk, and the nature of secondary hazards.
- Accurate, relevant, and detailed examples of recent earthquakes were compared to evaluate the differing factors that impacted lives and property. Examples frequently included Haiti, Christchurch and Japan (Tohoku).
- Magnitude was considered, not only in terms of its effect on the primary hazards such as ground shaking, and also in terms of its influence on the severity of secondary hazards such as tsunamis and mass movements. This allowed perceptive evaluations to be made.
- Detailed knowledge of seismic waves and of the various processes that lead to impacts on lives and property was used to compare and evaluate the relevant factors, other than magnitude.

Limited responses

- Some candidates explained the causes of earthquakes rather than focusing on impacts. Future candidates need to use their time more effectively by concentrating on the demand of the question.
- Some candidates used a wide range of examples, often with limited detail about each, and then tried to compare these earthquakes. Because so many examples were used, the comparisons were confused and the evaluation of the relevant factors was ineffective. Future candidates should choose a limited range of examples, using the factual information provided to make limited comparisons, leading to effective evaluations.
- A few candidates had limited or inaccurate knowledge of their chosen examples. This led to erroneous evaluations. Future candidates need to ensure that they have precise and accurate knowledge of their chosen examples, including the year of the earthquake, its magnitude, the number of casualties and the economic cost.
- Some responses included vague and generalised statements such as ‘preparation includes building earthquake-proof buildings’ with no indication of the techniques that make buildings earthquake proof, and no examples of these buildings. Once again, future candidates need to ensure that they have precise and accurate knowledge with which to develop the points that they have made.

Question 9

Comprehensive responses

- Very few candidates chose this question. There were several good responses, providing detailed knowledge of both phenomena and showing sound understanding of the processes involved in their formation and development.
- Understanding of the formation and development of hurricanes was usually very good, while the understanding of tornadoes was occasionally very good.
- Most candidates were able to compare the processes of formation and development quite well, using the varying spatial and temporal scales of the storms to good effect.
- Sometimes the atmospheric processes were well understood and this often led to a high-level response.

Limited responses

- Some candidates were able to describe the formation of hurricanes quite well and found tornadoes an enigma. Future candidates need to ensure they have good knowledge/understanding of both phenomena before choosing the question.
- Limited understanding of the processes of formation and development led to descriptive responses and ineffective comparisons. Again, future candidates need to have good understanding of both phenomena before choosing the question.
- Some candidates focused on impacts rather than formation and development. Future candidates need to ensure that they focus on the demand of the question.
- Sometimes candidates considered formation and gave less focus on development. Once again, future candidates need to ensure that they focus fully on the demands of the question.

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Option four – Hot arid and semi-arid environments

Question 10

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates were able to describe the main features of the cross-section, using details from the resource. The horizontal and vertical scales, together with the ley were used to good effect.

Limited responses

- Some candidates used long sentences containing vague and confused statements. Future candidates should use short, well focused sentences, describing the key features of the resource.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Several candidates realised that the key to answering this question was to relate it carefully to the features and environment of a hot arid environment.
- Many candidates were able to explain the importance of the water source, either as intermittent rainfall in the present day or more reliable rainfall in a past pluvial period.
- More effective responses explained the successive processes of erosion, transportation and deposition, supported by relevant detail and examples.

Limited responses

- Some candidates restricted their explanation to the deposition of material on the alluvial fan. Future candidates should take a more holistic approach, starting with the rainfall and progressing through the relevant processes in the formation of this feature.
- A few candidates focused on the playa rather than the alluvial fan. Candidates would benefit from maintaining a closer focus on the specific demand of the question.

Question 11

Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates chose either the Sahel or Dubai and showed that they had broad knowledge of the problems faced and sound understanding of the attempted solutions.
- Several candidates considered and evaluated all three aspects of sustainability; economic, environmental and social. Some candidates were able to link two or more of these together to provide a 'big picture' response.
- Several candidates focused on a restricted range of factors and were able to show good development of the points made and considerable depth of understanding.

Limited responses

- Some candidates used several case studies, or even just examples without sufficient place-specific detail. Future candidates must take more notice of the command 'using a case study…'
- A few candidates did not evaluate the statement 'the problems of sustainable management cannot be solved' and wrote a descriptive response covering a wide range of factors in a superficial and unstructured way. Future candidates should focus on fewer factors and structure their response in a way that clearly evaluates their chosen factors.
- Some candidates focused on problems with limited reference to management or focused on solutions without saying what the problems were. Future candidates need to clearly explain each problem and then describe and evaluate possible solutions to that problem, with a conclusion that brings their arguments together.

Question 12

Comprehensive responses

- Very few candidates chose this question. There were a few good responses, providing an evaluation of the various factors including latitude.
- A small number of responses were able to deal with the differences between the climatic characteristics of the two environments and link them to the relevant factors.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates focused on the causes of aridity and did not try to differentiate between the climatic characteristics of the two environments. Future candidates should respond more clearly to the main demand of the question.
- Very few candidates linked latitude to the Hadley Cell and the movement of the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone. Future candidates need to show a more thorough understanding of the relevant climatic factors, with clear links between them.

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GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/32
Advanced Physical Geography Options

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Many candidates were able to show their knowledge of geographical concepts throughout the paper
- Resource-based **part (a)** questions were well answered on the whole with candidates using their geographical skills to pick and quote information from each resource and use it effectively in their answers
- Knowledge-based **part (b)** questions were answered using the candidates' understanding of processes and where relevant were linked to the resources.
- There were a range of approaches to essays, many of which showed a clear understanding of the demands of the question
- Essays showed evidence of planning, with a range of factors discussed and real-life examples were often used as supporting evidence
- Evaluation was at times found within the body of the essay, and final conclusions reviewed each factor and gave an overall judgement based on evidence presented

What candidates needed to improve

- Some candidates did not use resources fully enough in the **part (a)** questions. Further reference to specific figures/details is needed.
- **Part (b)** questions were sometimes not focused on the question being asked. Candidates need to focus on the command word and give more in-depth explanatory detail of the processes.
- Essays could become a list of factors with only descriptive statements being given. Essays like this did not give the candidates the opportunity to argue a case. Often the conclusion contained an unsupported judgement as a result.
- Some essays mentioned a broad range of factors with little depth of analysis. It would be better for candidates to cover fewer factors but in more detail.
- Use of examples and case studies was variable. Some essays asked for a case study, which required a detailed, place-specific example. Sometimes these were vague and referred to generic characteristics of typical environments.

Comments on specific questions

Topic 1 – Tropical Environments

Question 1

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates were able to describe the differences between the climates shown on the two graphs effectively, quoting both numerical and monthly data, as well as using both precipitation and temperature data.
- Comparisons identified both similarities and differences

Limited responses

- Candidates did not quote data from the graphs
- Candidates only quoted temperature or rainfall
- Candidates only described the patterns, and did not include comparative statements such as 'on the other hand', 'however' etc.

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(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Candidates were able to identify reasons effectively, focussing on the role of the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) in particular.
- Candidates were able to explain what the ITCZ was, how it moved, and the resultant effects of its movement on the two environments due to their different latitudes
- Other factors such as the role of trade winds and proximity to the oceans were also mentioned.

Limited responses

- Candidates did not explain what the ITCZ was, nor how it moved/affected rainfall.
- Candidates mentioned the role of altitude – however the difference was very minimal so this factor was not really relevant
- Candidates mentioned both precipitation and temperature when the question only asked for precipitation

Question 2

Comprehensive responses

- The candidates that chose this questions generally had a good understanding of the role of weathering in the formation of karst landforms. They knew that carbonation was the key process, but also that biological weathering played a significant part.
- Candidates were able to link weathering to the tropical climatic conditions, showing understanding of the interplay of the different factors and as a result were able to evaluate the relative importance of these factors
- Candidates recognised the importance of other factors such as the nature of the limestone structure (large or small/numerous or few joints), tectonic activity and climate change.
- Candidates understood the way in which one type of karst landform can develop into another over time.

Limited responses

- Candidates did not understand the relevant types of weathering involved. Several candidates mentioned hydrolysis (relevant for granite landscapes) and freeze-thaw (not relevant to tropical climates)
- Candidates did not speak about landforms explicitly. There was some knowledge of the processes but the actual landforms were not mentioned.
- Some candidates only spoke about weathering without mentioning other factors, and so had little opportunity to evaluate weathering against other relevant factors

Question 3

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates were able to explain the different seral stages of the development of both humid tropical and seasonally humid environments
- Some candidates had an in-depth knowledge of the roe of humans, with some case study examples given. There was an understanding of plagioclimax.

Limited responses

- Candidates only referred to one type of ecosystem (humid or seasonally humid tropical).
- Candidates digressed to discuss animal habitats
- Candidates only mentioned plant characteristics in a descriptive way, and did not discuss other factors such as soils, relief, climate etc.
- Human impacts were sometimes limited to deforestation and fire. Candidates did not develop these concepts further.

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Option two – Coastal Environments

Question 4

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates were able to use the resource effectively, identifying the variations in both frequency of wave direction and wave height
- Data was used well, being quoted often and several answers were very comprehensive in their coverage of all the information provided.

Limited responses

- Some candidates simply went around the diagram in a clockwise fashion. Whilst this may have picked up the marks it was time-consuming and resulted in candidates over-answering the question, leaving them less time for the rest of the paper

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Candidates gave detailed responses about the role of wave direction on processes
- Candidates recognised that processes included transportation, erosion and deposition.
- Candidates were able to explain the differences swash-aligned and drift-aligned coasts, the role of wave refraction and the influence of wind conditions such as fetch and changes in prevailing winds
- Some candidates gave place-specific detail to embellish their responses.

Limited responses

- Candidates focused too much on explaining the creation of landforms rather than how wind direction affected processes
- Candidates mentioned other less relevant processes such as weathering
- Candidates digressed to talk about coral reefs, sand dunes and other coastal ecosystems.

Question 5

Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates knew the conditions that coral reefs require for growth, and were able to give detailed specific figures to indicate the range of tolerances – for example pH, temperature, depth of water etc.
- Some candidates were able to evaluate the relative importance of these factors.
- Candidates sometimes gave examples of where conditions had changed, and therefore where coral reefs had failed to thrive

Limited responses

- Candidates did not focus on the demands of the question. Some candidates turned this question into one abut threats to coral reefs and discussed how humans had threatened the conditions required. Whilst this had some relevance, ultimately the focus on the relative importance of the conditions was lost.
- Candidates referred to management strategies that humans had put in place to protect corals. Again, this did not focus on the demands of the question.
- Candidates did not use focuses, detailed examples to help develop their argument. The Great Barrier Reef was often quoted but due to its size more focused areas within it would have been more appropriate

Question 6

Comprehensive responses

- This was the most popular coastal essay and it was clear many candidates had prepared substantial case studies to answer it.
- Detailed case studies, in particular Holderness, allowed candidates to give their arguments supporting evidence.
- Candidates who focused on the problems of sustainable management, such as rapid erosion, flooding, cost etc. successfully focused their arguments, and this allowed them to weigh up whether coasts can be successfully managed
- Many candidates understood the nature of sustainability, and mention of economic, social and environmental sustainability allowed candidates to structure their arguments effectively.

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Limited responses

- Several examples used were very generic, without specific case study detail despite a stretch of coast being named.
- Problems of sustainable management were not addressed by some candidates. Several answers were a simple description of hard versus soft engineering without reference to problems or sustainability.
- Candidates did not focus on the question so the idea of 'how far do you agree' was lost. Candidates should focus on how far they agree with the specific statement given.

Option 3 – Hazardous Environments

Question 7

(a) Comprehensive responses

- This was the most popular topic and there were many good answers to this question. The resource required candidates to describe the pattern of change so an overview of the figure was required
- Candidates used figures from the diagram to give evidence of the changes, and worked in a systematic way through the graph
- Identifying the overall change, fluctuations, degrees of stability and any sudden changes were the best ways to achieve the marks.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not make 4 discrete points about the changes, and so could not access the full range of marks
- Candidates did not quote figures directly from the graph

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates recognised that the word 'hazard' had a human context, and so were able to identify the ways in which mass movements affected people
- A range of different mass movements were included, and an explanation of how they were formed in detail gave the best outcomes. For example, rotational slides formed as a result of heavy rainfall adding weight to the slope, increasing pore water pressure within the slope and acting as a lubricant on the slip plane all decrease the stability of the slope
- Examples from the real world gave a good context for the hazard element.

Limited responses

- Some candidates mentioned other hazards such as earthquakes or volcanoes, without contextualising them as triggers for mass movements
- Candidates often did not mention the human element and so their marks were limited
- Candidates did not explain how mass movements were formed
- Candidates did not make reference to the scale of hazard – so for example soil creep as a hazard may be less significant than a mudslide.

Question 8

Comprehensive responses

- This was the most popular essay in the paper. Many candidates were able to identify a range of volcanic hazards and could explain their nature in some depth.
- Candidates understood the nature of different types of lava flows and were able to reason that whilst they were undoubtedly dangerous, their viscosity meant they posed different degrees of danger. These were sometimes further related to types of volcano and therefore the types of eruption. Explosive (dangerous) eruptions usually have more viscous and therefore probably less dangerous lava.
- Manageability of lava was mentioned in several cases, as well as the idea that perhaps humans could be evacuated, but buildings couldn't.
- Candidates were able to identify that other hazards, such as pyroclastic flows, lahars and ash clouds were usually more significant, based on level of danger, predictability, manageability and areal extent.
- Case studies were comprehensive and there was some comparison between HIC and LIC examples, allowing candidates to evaluate the relative significance of different hazards to countries at different levels of development.

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Limited responses
- Candidates confused different types of lava, suggesting a'a was runny and pahoehoe was viscous
- Candidates gave descriptions of each different hazard without giving and idea of the relative significance
- Candidates gave a very limited range of hazards – in some cases only lava was mentioned, whilst at other times only one other hazard was compared to lava.
- Candidates did not give examples to back up their arguments, so some answers became vague and generic. More focused specific case studies would be helpful to future candidates.
- Candidates described other hazards not directly related to volcanoes and gave irrelevant examples such as the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami.

Question 9

Comprehensive responses
- Candidates were able to explain the significance of the impacts of both tornadoes and hurricanes
- Candidates understood the differences between primary and secondary impacts
- Candidates linked the impacts of atmospheric disturbances to specific hazards to give them a contextual framework.
- Candidates were able to describe and explain differences through the use of detailed case studies and could assess the significance both in terms of primary and secondary impacts as well as between countries at different levels of development.

Limited responses
- The most common issue was that candidates did not understand the difference between impacts and hazards, and so many candidates described storm surges, heavy rain, high winds etc. without actually going into detail about the impacts. Secondary hazards were then linked as being landslides, diseases etc. and so were better assessed.
- Some candidates did not make the distinction between primary and secondary hazards and simply looked at the significance of hazards/impacts in general.
- Candidates did not provide detailed examples to back up their arguments.
- Candidates tended to concentrate only on hurricanes. Tornadoes were often missed out all together.

Topic 4 – Hot arid and semi-arid environments

Question 10

(a) **Comprehensive responses**
- Many candidates were able to identify several features of the vegetation in the photograph, using adjectives to describe the nature of the plants shown.
- Candidates used terminology to identify locations within the photograph (foreground, background etc.)

Limited responses
- Candidates described features not seen within the photograph (wide spread roots etc.), making assumptions based on their knowledge.
- Some candidates did not use adjectives to describe what the plants were actually like.
- Some candidates described the surrounding landscape (rocky, clear blue skies etc.) which did not relate to the vegetation itself

(b) **Comprehensive responses**
- Many candidates were able to give detailed explanations as to why the vegetation appeared as it did.
- Many answers focused on the adaptations of vegetation, and why these enabled them to survive in this environment
- Candidates who referred not just to the climate, but also to soil conditions and other factors e.g. fire gained the highest standards.

Limited responses
- Some candidates referred to factors they had not mentioned in **10(a)**.
- A few candidates wrote very brief descriptions of the plants without explaining the function of the different features of the vegetation.

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Question 11

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates were able to identify a range of factors that affected the distribution of hot arid and semi-arid environments.
- Candidates understood the significance of latitude, but were also able to assess the relative importance on a more local scale of the other factors
- Most candidates were able to explain what role each factor played, and how it had a very specific impact on the climate of the area.
- Candidates gave a range of specific examples that were accurate and backed up their arguments effectively.

Limited responses

- Candidates did not understand the role of latitude. There was little reference to the Hadley Cell, descending air, high pressure or clear skies.
- Other factors were partially assessed or absent entirely. Some candidates simply mentioned other factors in passing.
- Other factors were not always well understood. For example, cold ocean currents were not well assessed, although other factors such as continentality and the rain shadow effect were better understood.
- Candidates did not appreciate that most locations had a range of factors rather than just one, however the over-arching factor does appear to be latitude.
- Examples were given in name only, and they were not always accurate. This question requires accurate use of place-specific information.

Question 12

Comprehensive responses

- This was the least popular essay question on the paper. Candidates knew a range of landforms in hot arid and semi-arid environments and were able to discuss their formation.
- Candidates distinguished between landforms of erosion and deposition
- Candidates recognised that both water and wind could be responsible for both erosion and deposition, and so comprehensive answers assessed the role of each
- Some candidates recognised that erosion was required to provide the material for the creation of depositional landforms and so concluded that erosion was actually more important.

Limited responses

- Candidates only focused on a narrow range of landforms. One or two erosion or depositional landforms were identified
- Relative importance of erosion and deposition was not assessed, so conclusions were sometimes just a description of what had already been written

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Paper 9696/33
Advanced Physical Geography Options

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

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Paper 9696/41
Advanced Human Geography Options

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Essays that considered all aspects of a question were often more effective. For example, **Question 5** required consideration of three aspects: levels of development, demand for energy, and the national scale.
- Some candidates analysed the intent of a question and thoroughly evaluated the contention. Their responses included an opening statement of intent, ongoing evaluative comment based on the examples or evidence presented, and a conclusion that added further evaluative comment rather than repeating earlier points.

What candidates needed to improve

- For structured questions such as **Questions 4(a), 7(a) and 10(a)**, candidates should make better use of the key, the axis labels, and the scale provided.
- Explanations for the structured questions sometimes ignored the scale required. For example, **Questions 4(b)** and **7(b)** required responses at the country scale, while **Question 10(b)** required consideration of the development of a region.
- Some essays focused on an inappropriate scale. For example, **Question 1** required consideration of involvement at the local scale, **Question 3** required knowledge of one country's industrial policy, and **Question 9** focused on one named tourist area or resort.

Comments on specific questions

Production, location and change

Question 1

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses identified the main uses as animal feed and food.
- These responses made clear comparisons of the uses of the agricultural crops. For example, only food is a use of all the crops.
- Each of the four uses were considered.
- Anomalies were identified for example animal feed comes from all crops except sugar.
- Comprehensive responses used the data accurately.

Limited responses

- Limited responses often took a crop-by-crop approach. For example, they stated that maize is the largest crop produced and that sugar is the least produced crop.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates were aware of two valid physical factors.
- Some candidates understood the meaning of agricultural practice such as irrigation, terracing, dry farming techniques, crop rotation, etc.
- Some candidates were able to link each practice to a specific physical factor. For example, irrigation is practised in areas of low rainfall.

Limited responses

- Many candidates did not understand what an agricultural practice is and confused it with a type of land use or agricultural system, such as pastoral or arable farming.

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Question 2

Comprehensive responses
- Many candidates understood the meaning of 'local scale' in terms of the farm, holding or producer.
- These candidates considered the concept of involvement at the local scale.
- Many candidates compared involvement at the local scale with other scales such as government policy or directives to producers.
- The response focused on the context of agricultural change caused by physical or human factors, for example, challenges of climate or changes in market conditions.
- Candidates evaluated the success of attempts to manage agricultural change by using clear but simple success criteria. For example, increased production; higher yields, increased farm income, and the introduction of new crops.
- Some candidates took a broader approach to success using criteria. For example, they considered reducing rural-urban migration, lowering vulnerability to natural disasters, overcoming resistance to change in local communities, and providing support for local producers through education or infrastructural developments.

Limited responses
- Some candidates did not understand the meaning of the local scale. For example, they focused mainly on government policy.
- Some candidates were unable to provide the context of specific attempts to manage agricultural change.
- Some candidates did not support their responses with reference to specific locations.

Question 3

Comprehensive responses
- Comprehensive responses demonstrated knowledge of the industrial policy of one country. For example, they referred to the policy and linked it to an issue faced by the manufacturing industry in that country.
- These responses described how the issue and the policy response led to a change in location, or to no change in location.
- These responses used examples of specific manufacturing industries and described the type of industry involved. They explained how its location was influenced by the issue and whether the policy response led to a change in location.
- Comprehensive responses evaluated the extent to which the location of specific industries had changed.

Limited responses
- Limited responses did not consider the issues facing the manufacturing industry.
- Some candidates had limited knowledge of specific aspects of the industrial policy of the named country.
- Some candidates took a general approach to the locational factors influencing manufacturing industry, with limited reference to either industrial policy or the issues of manufacturing industry.

Environmental management

Question 4

(a) **Comprehensive responses**
- Comprehensive responses noted that the data showed the percentage of electricity produced by nuclear energy. For example, the highest percentages were found north of the Equator.
- These responses were able to describe the distribution. They identified a clear concentration of countries in Europe and noted that nuclear energy was widely distributed across all the continents shown except Australasia.

Limited responses
- Limited responses referred to the amount of energy rather than the percentage of electricity produced by nuclear energy. For example, they referred to higher amounts being produced in the Northern Hemisphere and lower amounts being produced in the Southern Hemisphere.

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- These responses described Oceania/Australasia as Australia.
- These responses took a continent-by-continent approach.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses clearly explained two advantages of using nuclear energy to produce electricity for a country.
- The advantages identified in these responses were linked to the scale of a country. For example, nuclear power is one way in which a country can meet targets to reduce CO2 emissions compared to the use of fossil fuels.

Limited responses

- Limited responses did not clearly state and/or had more than two advantages.
- The advantage of using nuclear power was often expressed in general terms and was not linked to the scale of a country.

Question 5

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses had a reasonable coverage of how levels of development influence the demand for energy at the national scale. One successful way was to consider variations in demand for low income (LICs), middle income (MICs) and high income countries (HICs).
- Comprehensive responses focused on how different levels of development influence demand at the personal level and through the changing nature and balance of economic activities.
- These responses considered how increases in the level of technology associated with higher levels of development can both increase and decrease demand for energy across different activities and sectors of the economy.
- These responses used other factors to assess the extent to which levels of development influence the demand for energy at the national scale for example population size, provision of infrastructure and climate.
- These responses assessed the extent to which factors are linked together. For example, they considered how levels of urbanisation increase as economies transition from primary to secondary activities, or how the extension of supply to rural areas enables demand to increase.

Limited responses

- Limited responses were not balanced and provided little coverage of levels of development.
- These responses considered supply factors. For example, they provided lengthy descriptions of a located scheme such as the Three Gorges Dam or compared the advantages and disadvantages of renewable and non-renewable energy sources.
- These responses focused on personal energy use without considering the national scale.

Question 6

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses considered how the process of economic development is linked to the need to exploit more resources and manufacture more goods.
- These responses explained how factors such as rapid industrialisation may be prioritised at the expense of environmental control measures and protection.
- These responses linked factors such as poor agricultural practices to satisfy the growing demand for food in rapidly growing urban centres.
- These responses described how the causes and control of water pollution change through the different stages of economic development.
- These responses evaluated the extent to which economic development contributed to water pollution compared with other factors. For example, they considered political priorities, social factors, and attitudes.

Limited responses

- Limited responses focused on the impacts of water pollution rather than its causes. For example, they provided detailed explanations of the impacts of eutrophication.
- These responses considered pollution of land or air without linking it to water pollution.

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Global interdependence

Question 7

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Comprehensive responses made comparative statements using the range, average, and position relative to the threshold of primary product export dependence.
- These responses used accurate data.

Limited responses

- Limited responses did not understand the significance of the threshold. For example, some incorrectly stated that all of Oceania is below the threshold.
- These responses confused the Y axis with the percentage of countries in each region rather than the level of primary products in countries' exports.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- The most common areas of explanation in comprehensive responses focused on the price volatility of primary products, including the influence of global events and variations in production related to weather, natural disasters, or disease.
- Some candidates understood that reliance on exporting primary products can be problematic for countries that are classified as primary product export dependent, as shown in **Figure 7.1**.
- Some candidates focused on the scale of the problems for a country. For example, they related the issues to economic development or terms of trade.

Limited responses

- The problems were considered at the level of individual growers or producers, rather than at a broader national scale.

Question 8

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses clearly considered the role of lenders as a cause of the international debt crisis.
- Where a historical approach was taken to explain the causes of the international debt crisis, the chronology of events was correct.
- Comprehensive responses were based on a sound understanding of what the international debt crisis is, rather than simply explaining the causes of debt.
- These responses clearly explained why interest rates may vary between countries, including the higher rates often charged to developing countries. They also recognised how interest rates have changed over time, for example, the prolonged period of low interest rates following the 2008 financial crisis and subsequent changes in the post-COVID period.
- These responses recognised the complexities of international lending and borrowing.

Limited responses

- Limited responses lacked balance when considering the role of lenders and borrowers in causing the international debt crisis.
- There was a focus on simple reasons for borrowing rather than the international debt crisis.
- Limited responses drifted into comments on aid without linking these to the terms and conditions attached to financial aid.

Question 9

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses had a sound foundation of details for a specific tourist area or resort.
- These responses referred to changes in tourist numbers, including both increases and decreases, and/or described periods with different rates of growth.
- These responses considered sustainability from the perspective of tourists, the local tourist industry, host communities, and the local environment.
- A clear understanding of issues of sustainability was demonstrated rather than basic impacts.
- The extent to which changes in tourist numbers caused issues of sustainability was evaluated by considering how these issues changed over time, differed between periods of growth and periods of

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falling numbers, affected different groups, and could be positive for one group while negative for another.

Limited responses
- The scale of the tourist area was inappropriate, for example, at the national scale.
- The tourist area or resort was effectively generic, as the only reference made was repeated use of its name and lacked the detail expected for a case study.
- Limited responses took a basic approach to changes in tourist numbers, focusing only on high numbers.
- These responses were descriptive in style and focused on impacts rather than sustainability issues.
- These responses were unable to provide a balanced coverage of changes in tourist numbers. For example, they did not consider seasonality or other factors that may lead to lower tourist numbers.
- Other factors were provided without recognising that these had a clear impact on tourist numbers.

Economic transition

Question 10

(a) **Comprehensive responses**
- Comprehensive responses noted a general pattern of positive change in the central area, with negative change in the surrounding areas.
- These responses used the scale and features such as the Atlantic coastline and the border to describe the location, size, and extent of the areas being discussed.

Limited responses
- Limited responses used the names of states in isolation, without reference to their spatial extent.
- These responses did not recognise the positive and/or negative aspects of the change in gross domestic product.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**
- Comprehensive responses clearly described each way and explained how this can increase a specific aspect of the development of a region, for example, social, economic, political or environmental.
- The ‘way’ was an example of a government regional policy, not simply a national policy.

Limited responses
- Limited responses used more than two ways.
- The explanation did not connect the policy to increased development of a region.

Question 11

Comprehensive responses
- Comprehensive responses were based on a clear understanding of the secondary sector and economic development.
- The responses considered the ‘role’ of the secondary sector rather than simply describing characteristics of the secondary sector.
- Understanding of a variety of different roles of the secondary sector and how the role changes over time as the sector itself evolves was demonstrated and/or considered.
- The role of the secondary sector in economic development in comparison to the role of other sectors and how the role changes over time and/or from country to country was evaluated.

Limited responses
- Limited responses had a narrow view of the role of the secondary sector.
- These responses did not link the role of the secondary sector to economic development.
- A few candidates confused the secondary sector with the primary sector.

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Question 12

Comprehensive responses

- Comprehensive responses were well founded on examples of newly industrialised countries (NICs), such as the Asian Tiger economies, including South Korea, and/or more recent examples such as China and India.
- These responses evaluated the extent to which the impacts were positive or negative by considering changes over time, differences between groups within society, and the political and/or environmental impacts.
- These responses considered wider impacts in high-income countries. For example, they referred to the impacts of de-industrialisation, global effects on consumer choice, and issues related to climate change.

Limited responses

- Limited responses presented examples that were not well founded. For example, some responses relied on simplistic interpretations of historical examples from the first period of growth of NICs, such as the Asian Tigers.
- Limited responses lacked balance, for example, by focusing more on the impacts of transnational corporations.
- These responses used a descriptive approach, with limited evaluation of the statement that NICs cause more positive than negative impacts.

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GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/42
Advanced Human Geography Options

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Most candidates were able to read a stacked bar graph, with only a few misreading the y-axis. In general, part **(a)**'s were answered well, with most candidates demonstrating some understanding of the task.
- Many candidates engaged effectively with the part **(a)** resource by identifying patterns and anomalies. Responses were most effective when candidates identified the overall pattern before describing individual aspects.
- Most candidates used located examples effectively in their essay responses and developed these with details specific to those locations.
- Essays that remained focused on the question were generally more effective than those which included details that were only partially relevant. Time spent thinking 'what is this question about?' and 'what examples are appropriate?' is never wasted.
- Candidates who used models, sometimes even to structure their essays, demonstrated their understanding more clearly and often produced more developed responses.

What candidates needed to improve

- Some candidates continue to list in the part **(a)**'s, taking each source separately and making simple comments. Candidates would benefit from engaging with the resources as a whole.
- Responses to Part (b) would benefit from the use of relevant examples supported by developed reasoning to get level 3. Many candidates made simple statements with brief explanations, limiting the development of their response.
- Essays that avoid the factor in the question, instead focusing on the factors that the candidate knows more about, tend to be limited to level 2.
- Evaluation without supporting evidence was often less convincing, even when the argument was logical and clear. Good geographers know the world and use this knowledge as evidence in their arguments.
- Using phrases such as 'To evaluate...' may help candidates to signal evaluative discussion. However, the most effective responses integrated evaluation throughout the essay rather than leaving it until the conclusion.
- 'Name dropping' examples without providing relevant context limited the effectiveness of the response.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many answers included descriptions of the changes shown in all 3 sources of change: area, multicropping and yield. Many candidates also identified that the overall change was more positive than negative.

Limited responses

- These answers took a bar-by-bar descriptive approach, listing the change seen in each world region.

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(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates were able to explain two practices and tended to choose those relating to fertiliser use or irrigation. Specific examples were often used as evidence of where yield has increased due to these practices.
- Many of the explanations showed an awareness of HYV seeds and their potential benefits for increasing yield, with some responses on issues they can bring relevant to the explanation.

Limited responses

- Some candidates wrote very brief statements, with limited development of the explanation or reasoning behind the subsequent increase in yield.

Question 2

Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates used appropriate place examples as evidence for physical factors having a significant impact on agriculture with the subsequent agricultural change clearly explained.
- Candidates showing an awareness of the impacts of more than one physical factor did well, such as climate, relief, soils and extreme weather.
- Essays which identified the links between physical and human factors provided a more balanced explanation of agricultural change.

Limited responses

- Examples drawn from very large areas, such as Amazon, were often described in general terms, making it more difficult to explain the specific influence of physical factors.
- Essays which had one paragraph about physical factors and then moved swiftly on to focus on other factors were often less effective. As the question focused on physical factors, responses would benefit from maintaining this emphasis throughout the essay. Other factors are relevant if they do not dominate the answer.

Question 3

Comprehensive responses

- Essays which included a range of government policies and considered the influence of this relative to each other tended to focus well on the question.
- Examples of specific policies at a named point in time worked well in this essay.
- Candidates who considered the multiplier effect on the 'related service industry' identified in the question often produced more developed responses.

Limited responses

- Essays which moved away from government policy too quickly, focusing on other factors, or ignoring government policy altogether were often less effective.
- Likewise, those candidates who only covered one government policy also limited the evaluation aspect of the question. Other factors could be included and are important, although government policy should remain the focus of the response.

Question 4

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates identified the overall trend with correct data and then described the changes to individual renewable sources.
- Those who consistently used accurate data did well on this question, along with use of descriptive language such as 'greatest' or 'least change'.

Limited responses

- A few candidates were unsure how to read the y-axis of the bar graph and therefore showed limited understanding of the changes shown over the year.
- A few candidates only described individual renewable sources and did not include an overall view of the total changes. Responses benefited from combining an overall view with details of individual sources.

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(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates dealt with the monthly variations well, showing an awareness of how a variable climate can lead to issues in most of the types of renewables shown in Figure 4.1.
- There was some excellent use of located examples as evidence, such as drought along the Yangtze reducing production at the Three Gorges Dam, or seasonal changes in incoming solar radiation in Scandinavian countries.
- Some candidates used evidence from Figure 4.1 for Japan to illustrate monthly variation effectively. Part (b) responses did not necessarily need to build on evidence used in part **(a)**'s; however, where evidence from the figure was applied appropriately to the question, it often strengthened the explanation.

Limited responses

- Many candidates did not deal with the monthly variations and instead describing how climate affects renewable energy, usually solar and wind power.
- Some detailed explanations did not consider the monthly variations associated with these renewable energy sources, limiting the relevance of the response to the question.
- Some candidates chose geothermal energy and tried to explain how this showed monthly variations.

Question 5

Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates took the approach of explaining how using fossil fuels leads to more pollution and then gave the counter argument that most renewables reduce pollution. This worked well for most candidates when evidence was provided.
- Models can be used effectively to develop a concept within a response. For example, Kuznets environmental curve can effectively illustrate the change in pollution as a country's level of development increases.
- Relevant examples included Norway (HEP), China (solar and wind), and France (nuclear), among others.

Limited responses

- Some candidates only reference to pollution was global warming from greenhouse gases. While this is a valid approach, more developed responses considered other forms of pollution, including air, water and land pollution, such as airborne particulate matter and water pollution from accidental spills.
- A few responses only considered one type of pollution.
- Some candidates tried to subvert the question by just talking about the advantages and disadvantages of the Three Gorges Dam rather than addressing the broader focus of the question.

Question 6

Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates selected relevant examples, such as the Aral Sea, Pearl River Delta, Ganges River and New Delhi, which have current problems that are being dealt with.
- Candidates who gave background about the causes of the degradation were often better able to assess whether the management strategy addressed the underlying cause or merely alleviated its impacts.

Limited responses

- A significant number of candidates tried to use the London Docklands as their example, which rarely worked well as the management has overcome social problems (to some extent), and there was limited content offered about environmental degradation in this example. This example is also becoming quite dated now and better ones are available.
- Some candidates became overly focused on the causes of the degradation and gave limited attention to assess the management strategies.

Question 7

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates showed a good level of map skills, using the Equator and continent names to describe the pattern they could see.
- Many candidates identified clusters where one energy type was dominant within continents. These were often for the Middle East or regions of Africa.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates did not identify clusters and instead made general comments about the overall pattern.
- A few candidates confused Europe describing it as having a high amount of energy. The continent Oceania was sometimes called Australia.
- Some candidates interpreted the size of the country as being important.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates were able to explain how the barriers to trade are removed in free trade.
- Many candidates used named trade blocs effectively and developed these examples by referring to the types of products traded and the reduction of trade restrictions.

Limited responses

- Some confused free trade to be Fairtrade.
- Some gave the name of a trade bloc without providing relevant context or development

Question 8

Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates had strong case study knowledge of different types of aid and were able to use these effectively to identify the involvement of local community, or lack of.

Limited responses

- Often candidates had useful examples which were not used effectively to address the question.
- There was a tendency to talk generally about aid and consider advantages/disadvantages, rather than address the key idea of community involvement.

Question 9

Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates covered economic, environmental and social sustainability with some focusing on one aspect only. More developed responses showed how the balance between these aspects changes as the resort develops.
- There were some excellent essays which incorporated modern examples, such as Doha, Iceland and Dubai.
- Candidates who used the Tourist life cycle model to show how the resort developed tended to do well. Others used the Doxey model to illustrate social sustainability.

Limited responses

- A number of candidates used Blackpool as their case study. In some responses, the example provided limited opportunities to discuss recent resort development and sustainability compared with more contemporary case studies.
- The essay required the response to show change over time ‘as the tourist area or resort developed’ and sometimes this was missing.
- Some candidates name a resort but provided no specific details. If the evidence provided could be applied to any location, this is classed as generic and limited to level 2, max 8.

Question 10

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates identified at least two comparisons, often noting the three regions in the top 20 per cent and the majority in the middle 60 per cent.

Limited responses

- Some candidates only described the UK regions and did not include the Greater London area in their answers.

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(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many responses considered a range of factors contributing to the growth of one region compared with another and supported these explanations with examples from countries such as China, Brazil and the UK.

Limited responses

- Some candidates focused primarily on migration and gave limited consideration to the wider range of factors involved.

Question 11

Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates were able to use industrialised countries such as the UK to show the change in the role of the primary sector in the balance of economic sectors. Some used the Clark-Fisher model to illustrate this.
- Many candidates included examples of mineral-and-energy extracting countries as continuing to have important primary sectors even as their economies develop.

Limited responses

- Few candidates discussed the characteristics of the primary sector, with most focusing on its role within the economy.

Question 12

Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates used relevan examples, often involving TNCs, to explain how industrial development had increased wealth and contributed to increases in trade and globalisation.
- Some candidates also considered other factors, including political involvement, trade blocs, and developments in shipping and communications technology, supporting their responses with relevant evidence.

Limited responses

- Some candidates focused on single NIC, often China, which limited the breadth of the response.

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GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/43
Advanced Human Geography Options

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

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